



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 7, 2020**

Date: May 1, 2020

From: Councillor Loveday, Councillor Potts, Councillor Dubow and Councillor Isitt

Subject: Ensuring Housing Options with Supports for Everyone

Background:

The City of Victoria is currently facing compounding health crises: housing, mental health, addictions and overdose deaths, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Province of British Columbia has enacted a Public Safety order to end the encampments at Topaz Park and Pandora Green and has offered to move all people sheltering in these locations into hotel rooms or other indoor shelter spaces. This order mandates the evacuation of these sites by May 9, 2020.

The Provincial action creates the opportunity to advance the human rights of vulnerable populations in a way that has not been pursued for decades, including advancing housing rights and access to health services and harm-reduction services. Moving people indoors, without support services, also poses risks including an elevated risk of overdose deaths if harm-reduction services including safer supply are not introduced immediately. The Provincial order is also limited in its scope to persons sheltering at Topaz Park and Pandora Green, and does not offer relief for unhoused people sheltering elsewhere in the city and region.

It is therefore recommended that Council place itself on record expressing appreciation for the Provincial government's leadership in mobilizing housing and supports for people currently residing in Topaz Park and Pandora Green, while also requesting that the Province extend the availability of housing and supports for everyone who is unhoused in the City of Victoria and Capital Region, to address the compounding crises of homelessness, mental health, addictions and overdose, and Covid-19.

Recommendations:

That Council request that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Premier of British Columbia, the Solicitor General and the Ministers of Housing, Health, and Mental Health and Addictions, copying Members of the Legislative Assembly representing constituencies in the Capital Region and the executive leadership of BC Housing and Island Health, as follows:

1. Thanking the Provincial Government for their decisive action to provide indoor sheltering with support services for people currently sheltering at Topaz Park and Pandora Green.
2. Requesting that the Provincial Government offer the provision of temporary housing options with supports for all unhoused people in the Capital Region, with no one to be evicted back to the street, as a step towards ending chronic homelessness and providing safe, secure, adequate, and affordable homes for all.
3. Requesting that safer supply services be instituted without delay including ensuring appropriate staffing levels, 24-hour supports and that support services staff are trained in the provision of harm reduction. Further, requesting that BC Housing and other agencies utilize the expertise of local peer-run and peer-informed harm reduction services while providing supports.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Loveday', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Loveday

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Potts', with a large, looping 'S' shape.

Councillor Potts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dubow', with a large, stylized 'A' shape.

Councillor Dubow

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isitt', with a stylized 'B' shape.

Councillor Isitt