

That Council allocate an Emergency Social Services Grant of \$6,500 for the “Meegan Community Care Tent” to the Red Cedar Café Society as the grant recipient and permit holder.

Service Location

A further notable adjustment to the original proposal relates to the service location. In their application, the proponents included a site located within the boundary of Beacon Hill Park, given the focus on vulnerable residents sheltering in the west area of the park. However, staff concluded that the proposed infrastructure could not be accommodated within the park, due to a conflict with the Beacon Hill Trust and acceptable uses of the park associated with this legal requirement. Based on a rapid assessment of other potential locations in the area, a new site was identified on Avalon Street (as shown in Attachment A).

The new proposed location within an existing parallel parking area will meet the needs of the service provider and is next to a pedestrian crosswalk linking to Beacon Hill Park. The location, however, is not without challenges and siting the care tent will undoubtedly have impacts on the immediate neighbourhood. For example, to address traffic and pedestrian safety needs, a portion of Avalon Street near Douglas Street, will need to be closed to vehicle traffic while the care tent is operational. Driveways to private residences would be maintained, however, up to 13 “resident-only” parking spots will be temporarily removed, and additional signage will direct traffic from Douglas Street and Huntington Place. Staff have confirmed that all sidewalks would remain open and unobstructed.

Staff have progressed the planning work with the service providers based on the assumption that this new location can serve as a temporary site for the proposed service. Should Council not be supportive of this site, alternate direction would be required.

Accessibility Considerations

Providing services close to the sheltering community reduces barriers for those living with disabilities, and other mobility challenges. Staff and the applicant have continued to focus on options which will ensure safe access for those sheltering in the park while mitigating negative impacts to others who may be affected by the proposed temporary service.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The grant funds come from the Federal/Provincial COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant for Local Governments provided to municipalities for pandemic recovery and are currently factored into 2021 Financial Plan, no additional resources are required. Should Council approve RCCS as the grant recipient and permit holder, a one-time allocation of \$6,500 would be issued once the applicant has successfully met the conditions of the permit.

CONCLUSIONS

The ESS grant program is intended to support community-based organizations with immediate assistance for vulnerable residents during the pandemic. Pending Council's direction on the matter described above, the City will continue to allocate staff resources on a priority basis to ensure the proposed service can be launched safely and in a timely manner to achieve the approved objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

Derrick Newman
Assistant Director

Thomas Soulliere
Director

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

List of Attachments:

Attachment A - Location of Permit Area