

Citizens Advisory Committee

Site recommendation for Shelter & Supportive Housing in Maple Ridge May 1, 2017

“The right model can go anywhere.”

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Committee Members

CHRISTINE BICKLE, CHAIR

Christine and her husband have raised five children in Maple Ridge and own and operate a small business on Lougheed Highway. Her work life has been varied: administration, fundraising, marketing, special event planning, human resources, accounting and working with volunteers, committees and boards. When she found her business in the pathway of a low barrier shelter, she mobilized. Through the process of collecting petition signatures, she met and spoke to hundreds of people. Like so many others she met, her life has been profoundly affected by addiction. She says she felt privileged to work alongside committee members to help contribute meaningfully to a solution for the community.

DARIN FROESE

Darin has been involved in social service delivery for over 25 years, holding Executive Director positions with Income Assistance and BC Housing. He has an extensive background in shelter operations and issues around homelessness, having been a member or co-chair at local committees in Richmond, North Vancouver, Tri-Cities, Burnaby, Surrey, Abbotsford, and Metro Vancouver's Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. He is also the former Director of Operations at the Lookout Society, the Lower Mainland's largest shelter operator, and is currently the CEO of the New Vista Society in Burnaby. With his family, he has been a resident of Maple Ridge for 20 years.

LISA SULLIVAN

A resident of Maple Ridge for 16 years, committee member Lisa Sullivan and her Cliff Avenue family home were in the direct path of the Cliff Avenue Homeless Camp. This experience combines with 20 years in the field of support services to give her a unique perspective. Lisa worked for 15 years as a child and youth care worker with SHARE Family and Community Services. She holds a Classroom and Community Support Worker Diploma from Douglas College with a specialty in Behaviour Intervention. She is currently an Education Assistant supporting children and youth in School District 42 and provides support to children and youth with autism diagnosis at Pivot Point Family Growth Centre. Lisa also obtained a Masters Certification with Mind and Body connection healing therapies, studying for seven years.

SANDY MACDOUGALL

Sandy Macdougall has lived in Maple Ridge most of his life. He is a retired reporter who also served three consecutive terms on Maple Ridge Municipal Council. He has volunteered with many local and provincial organizations. As one of the original volunteers for the Maple Ridge Treatment Centre, he played a key role in its establishment. Sandy is a recovering alcoholic with 53 years of unbroken sobriety. He has lost two loved siblings and a cherished grandson due to their involvement in drugs. He also brings the seniors perspective to the table.

JESSE STRETCH

Jesse is a business owner and resident of Maple Ridge. He has been hands-on and active dealing with the homeless situation, assisting with identifying and cleaning up camps and problem areas. Over the past two years he has collected thousands of needles from local parks and schools and continues this work as a volunteer foot soldier in the fight against needle contamination. Jesse says it's been a pleasure working with the many great people

he's met through his work with a variety of community groups and service organizations dedicated to finding a viable to solution to the homeless situation.

ROB THEISSEN

In 1972, Rob began his career in the construction industry through his own business. His focus was mostly single family housing and land development, both in Canada and the U.S. In 2000, he retired and began volunteering at Hope for Freedom Society. Shortly thereafter he became the Managing Director and CEO of Hope for Freedom. Since 1996, the principle focus of the organization was to provide longer term residential addiction supportive recovery for men and women. In 2006, Rob led Hope for Freedom into mitigating the homeless issue in the Tri-Cities through Homeless outreach and seasonal shelters for the homeless. Since 2000, Rob has also been involved in a number of water and housing relief projects in third world countries. Rob is a husband and a father of three children, and a grandfather of seven grandchildren.

DR. PAUL BECKETT

Dr. Beckett was born and raised in the Ridge-Meadows area, attending Pitt Meadows Secondary. He completed his medical degree and residency training at University of Calgary before returning to work at Ridge-Meadows Hospital for ten years first as an Emergency Room physician, then as the Hospitalist chief. He subsequently served the medical needs of incarcerated women and men, directing medical care at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women, Fraser Regional Correctional Centre and Surrey Pretrial Services Centre. He is a former medical director at two addictions centres, Maple Ridge Treatment Centre (men) and Hannah House (women). Dr. Beckett currently provides Opioid Assisted Therapy through Alouette Addictions, serves the medical needs of patients at several recovery centres in Maple Ridge, provides medical services at Fraser Health's withdrawal management centre (Creekside Detox) and was contracted a few weeks ago to work with the newly formed Intensive Case Management team working directly with our street entrenched citizens in Maple Ridge. He is a member of both the Canadian and American Societies of Addiction Medicine, a specialist in addiction and in family practice, and an active member of the Ridge-Meadows Division of Family Practice.

Mandate

The Citizens Advisory Committee has been tasked with recommending a site for a \$15M purpose built shelter and supportive housing facility. The group felt strongly that the "where" could not be determined without the "what" and therefore extended its mandate to provide strong recommendations about the operations and building structure itself.

We were instructed by the MLAs to use public input, as outlined below, as our guide.

- Close to 16,000 signatures on two petitions against earlier shelter proposals
- 800 people who attended a public rally against the Quality Inn
- Several hundred emails and telephone calls that came into the two local constituency offices
- Neighborhood canvassing conducted by MLAs Bing and Dalton.
- Advertised coffee meetings and meetings by appointment at the MLA offices
- Comment cards filled out by 700 plus citizens at the MLA's Have Your Say meeting.

What The MLAs Heard:

During exhaustive consultation with community members one on one and during the public meeting held at the Maple Ridge Baptist Church, the MLAs heard -

1. No Low Barrier Shelter in downtown
2. You want a local decision made by a citizen's committee
3. No to the Rain City temporary shelter
4. Going forward: one shelter – One operator
5. Provide Mental health and addiction services
6. Increase affordable housing

The Citizens Advisory Committee has utilized points one through five in drafting its presentation to the MLAs. Item six is beyond the committee's scope.

Considerations:

- Residents, business and community impact
- Meeting current and future needs of residents
- Addressing business and legal end of establishing facility

In Brief

Taking care of neighbours

- A site away from single-family residential areas is recommended. Crime that supports addiction will not be tolerated. Breaches in behavior will result in removal from the facility.
- Curfews will be in place with no in/out privileges past certain hours
- A location on Lougheed Highway or Dewdney Trunk will not be considered.
- A location downtown will not be considered
- No low barrier

Taking care of residents

- Reasonable access to public transportation or the handy dart system
- Reasonable access to municipal and provincial services
- Reasonable access to emergency services
- A medical office will be on-site. Fraser Health will provide infrastructure and contract the appropriate nursing, physician and social work personnel to service the medical needs
- We require the Fraser Health Authority to have an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) or an Intensive Case Management (ICM) Team established in the Ridge Meadows community permanently, not just for the current crisis.
- The site should be well landscaped and have fencing features that offers confidentiality for clients of the facility.
- A path to treatment should be within easy access.

Taking care of business

- Restorative Justice will be a part of program offering and preference will be given to a provider that has staff trained in this area.
- A committee that includes community members will be struck to hold the operator accountable to its operating memorandum and good neighbor agreement commitments. Transparency and open relationships with all service providers, neighbours, businesses, police and emergency services is strongly encouraged. An enforceable code of conduct for residents is required and a complaint resolution process determined.
- Key Performance Indicators will be established for all service providers and monthly reports about progress will be given to the oversight group.

Location

The committee considered 15 sites in Maple Ridge. Using the criteria articulated under The Report section in this document, they have forwarded a location recommendation to BC Housing.

Where we stand today

Location recommendations are now in the hands of BC Housing. BC Housing will undertake due diligence and if the site is deemed acceptable the location will move to the MLAs for decision. If the recommended site moves forward it will trigger discussions with the City of Maple Ridge and other partners. The property will then be placed under contract. Once the property is tied up under an interim agreement, it will become public. It will then proceed through the zoning process; where the public input takes place.

Failure to properly address legal matters and announcing the property before it is under contract could kill the deal. It could also end up costing taxpayers significantly more money. Property prices can be inflated when sellers realize they are dealing with government. The perception is they are bottomless pit of money when, in fact, it is taxpayer's money.

If the location is not deemed satisfactory, we would expect this committee would be reconvened to bring forth another location. Please remember that a significant part of committee efforts have been directed, not only to location, but to a model that mitigates impact to the surrounding communities while meeting the needs of residents.

Our Report

The community advisory committee has been tasked with recommending a site for a \$15M purpose built shelter and supportive housing facility. We are comprised of members with varied backgrounds and lived experiences related to matters of homelessness and addiction. We are your neighbours, business owners, co-workers and volunteers whose goal it is to recommend a site that will work for the community at large, the homeless and those struggling with addiction and mental illness.

The committee recognizes that our mandate, while narrow, does not preclude us from making strong recommendations about the building structure and operating agreement. The committee also recognizes that decision makers including BC Housing, our municipal council and the community have a voice that may affect, change or alter these recommendations.

We believe:

The right model can go anywhere.

The communities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows are caring and compassionate but they are growing impatient for a resolution to this matter. They feel that they have not had a voice throughout this process.

The perception that Maple Ridge has more low barrier shelter beds available than any municipality outside Vancouver/100,000 residents cannot be dismissed and needs to be a consideration in the decision-making process.

It is important that the community accepts realistic building timelines for this facility. This solution will not appear overnight.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. That the facility should not be operated as a Low Barrier Facility.
2. That there should be one shelter in Maple Ridge.
3. That a location on Lougheed Highway or Dewdney Trunk will not be considered.
4. That a downtown location will not be considered.
5. That the operating conditions from the community advisory committee become a part of the rezoning process and be imbedded into the operating agreement for the non-profit chosen to oversee the facility.
6. That the physical space needs to be large enough for the staging of different needs.
7. That the number of beds will be tied to Maple Ridge population and consist of shelter beds, supported housing units for those shelter residents who have made a commitment toward a positive transition and extreme weather mats to be used when need arises.
8. That if there is an RFP process then we would like to have a member from this committee be appointed to help choose the service provider.
9. That a committee that includes community members will be struck to hold the operator accountable to its operating memorandum and good neighbor agreement commitments. Transparency and open relationships with all service providers, neighbours, businesses, police and emergency services is strongly encouraged. An enforceable

code of conduct for residents is required and a complaint resolution process determined.

10. That a medical office will be on-site. Fraser Health will provide infrastructure and contract the appropriate nursing, physician and social work personnel to service the medical needs of homeless people: Disability, mental illness and substance use disorders will particularly be managed in a manner befitting current evidence-based medical standards of care.
11. That case management must be in place for supported housing residents with articulated consequences when breeches occur up to and including removal from the facility.
12. That mandatory 360-degree assessment of social, physical and mental health status with agreement on appropriate and measurable treatment goals is required at intake.
13. That treatment on demand will be available, based on community resources, with preference given to operators that have other housing and sober living options, including life skills and back to work programs.
14. That we require the Fraser Health Authority to have an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) or an Intensive Case Management (ICM) Team established in the Ridge Meadows community permanently, not just for the current crisis.
15. That guidelines about length of stay will be articulated – residents will be offered and (hopefully) sign case management plans and housing tenants will sign program participant agreements. This is not permanent housing and residential tenancy agreements will not be considered.
16. That curfews will be in place for the shelter and there will be no in/out privileges past certain hours. Police admissions is the only exception to the curfew policy.
17. That we would like to encourage that the shelter establishes relationships with Homeless Outreach workers and treatment service providers and that outreach services be consolidated to one group/provider.
18. That reasonable access to public transportation or the handy dart system, municipal and provincial services as well as emergency services is preferred.
19. That restorative Justice will be a part of program offering and preference will be given to a provider that has staff trained in this area.
20. That Key Performance Indicators will be established for all service providers and monthly reports about progress will be given to the oversight group.
21. That traffic safety will be considered when determining a site. This is important for all constituents - residents, drivers, pedestrians, and neighbours.
22. That crime that supports addiction will not be tolerated. Breeches in behavior will result in removal from the facility.
23. That sites with access to city services and water will be given preference in consideration of location.
24. That a site away from single-family residential areas is recommended. The site should be well landscaped and have fencing features that offers confidentiality for clients of the facility.