

October 28, 2015

Help for the homeless in Campbell River

With winter weather coming soon, homeless people in Campbell River will again be able to seek refuge from driving rain and diving temperatures in an emergency shelter.

From November 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, Campbell River Family Services Society will manage the emergency shelter, located on Radiant Life Community Church property on Cypress St.

The shelter houses 16 beds in a converted shipping container that required extensive restoration work this year. The \$15,000 restoration funded by the City of Campbell River included repainting the inside and outside of the shelter and installing a more efficient heating system.

The emergency shelter, which the original owner offered to Campbell River Family Services Society for \$1, is now in place and ready to operate.

“Family Services recognizes the emergency shelter is a temporary solution, and we would like to have it open every night,” says Camille Lagueux, the society’s executive director. She adds, *“The City has been really supportive, and working together makes a huge difference for our most vulnerable citizens. The challenge is to find funding for nights that don’t fall into the extreme weather criteria. We’re hoping the community will rally behind us to help.”*

Lagueux suggests families or businesses could consider sponsoring the cost of operating a bed or a room in the shelter for the winter. Anyone who would like to help is asked to contact Paul Mason at 250-287-2421.

“Council is pleased to support the renovations of the shelter and work with Family Services and Radiant Life Church to provide these critical services. On behalf of the entire community, City Council extends its great appreciation to Family Services and Radiant Life Church for their initiative and dedication to helping homeless people,” says Mayor Andy Adams. *“With the emergency shelter now restored and ready to operate, we encourage residents, groups and organizations to do what they can to provide support for operating the shelter and meal programs.”*

In 2009, the total number of unsheltered people in Campbell River was 37. A survey conducted this September indicates that number has grown to 52. In addition, approximately 33 people are homeless, but staying in local shelters.

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Background:

Along with locating the emergency shelter on vacant land next to the fire hall for the past two winters, and funding support for this fall’s restoration, recent City initiatives related to assist affordable housing and alleviating homelessness include:

- Land donation for women’s transition house (Rose Harbour) covered development and servicing fees
- Palmer (Nikola) place - covered development and servicing fees
- Habitat for Humanity land donations



- Sustainable Official Community Plan – incorporates social wellbeing/social issues
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan incorporates social wellbeing/social issues
- Supporting our Social Mosaic: A Social Development Plan (2010)
- Affordable Housing Strategy 2010
- Community Health Network (Regional)
- Homelessness Coalition
- Social Planning Committee
- Youth Engagement Strategy
- Crime Reduction Strategy

Over the past decade the City of Campbell River has developed and contributed to dozens of social initiatives throughout the community.

Even though the City does not have a designated social planning function, the plans and policy framework of the City often integrates the known community social needs, and almost all City departments regularly contribute to the delivery of social programs and initiatives. Of all the social planning issues in the City, homelessness has become the most acute challenge. This issue was highlighted by the need for the temporary emergency shelter in 2013. Also, the increase in public drunkenness and related issues in the downtown are symptomatic of this growing challenge.

Vancouver Island Health Authority has also recently initiated a regional Community Health Network and invited the City to participate.

The following is not an exhaustive list of the current and ongoing initiatives, but provides a sample of how the City has and continues to work on a variety of initiatives to alleviate homelessness in Campbell River.

Affordable Housing Strategy

The Affordable Housing Strategy (2010) developed three goals with the intent to enable more non-market housing, market rental housing, non-market home ownership and market home ownership. The goals identify the need for housing options for low income and homeless populations, greater diversity in the housing stock and work to protect the current levels of affordability for home ownership. For each goal the strategy outlines key actions for the City, developers and non-governmental organizations.

Supporting our Social Mosaic: A Social Development Plan for the City of Campbell River

This report is a summary of the supporting Social Mosaic Planning Workshop in 2010. This was an initiative of the Social Planning Committee, a community based group consisting of representatives from a variety of social service and health service providers. The City was a stakeholder in this process and helped support the committee's efforts to develop the plan. The document outlines seven key areas with specific actions to address the identified issues.

The seven plan areas are:

- Food Security, social inclusion and accessibility
- Public Safety
- Training, employment and Income security
- Housing, Shelter and Homelessness
- Health and Well-being
- Children, youth, seniors and families
- Community development



Women's Transition house

The City and the North Island Transition Society worked together to develop a 27-unit women's transition house. The City help the Society secure the land and covered all of the development charges including works and service, all application fees and development cost charges. The project was completed in 2013.

Sobering Assessment Centre

The City received a request from the Family Services Society for support in establishing a sobering assessment centre. Working with Discovery Chiropractic, the location at the corner of 13th and Fir was identified as a potential location for this centre. This property was acquired by the City through a land swap in early 2015. Additional information is required to determine the scope of the service to be provided within the sobering assessment centre. The City has committed to working with the community through a consultation program to review the proposed location and the community requirements for the potential scope of services that may be provided.

Temporary Extreme Weather Shelter

The temporary emergency shelter was established in 2013 with a partnership between Radiant Life Church and the City. Radiant Life Church previously ran this shelter on the City-owned land at 1241 Dogwood Street, which has since been sold to Discovery Chiropractic. The emergency shelter is now located on the Radiant Life Church property.

Habitat for Humanity

The City donated land on 9th Ave. in 2007 for construction of a duplex. A second donation on Hilchey was made in 2013, and the construction of a duplex was completed in May 2015. The City also donated additional land to Habitat in October 2014 on Westgate Road, with construction of a duplex to start in March 2016. Funds for the development and connection fees, development cost charges and direct external costs are to be covered by the City.

Campbell River's Official Community Plan (OCP) envisions a community that provides an affordable and healthy community for all residents, which includes access to adequate housing, food, water, and health and educational services. Social issues highlighted in the plan include:

- Homelessness and housing
- Crime and Crime Prevention
- Food security
- Accessibility to places and programs
- Children and Youth
- Seniors
- Arts and culture