

NEWS RELEASE

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City to comply with tent city Health Order

Following an extension given to a Hazard Abatement and Prevention Order to the City of Nanaimo with respect to the tent city property on 1 Port Drive, Council has chosen to comply with the order to ensure the health and safety of occupants as well as the surrounding area. Starting today, temporary free flowing potable water has been made available to the occupants of tent city. Three additional porta-potties have already been provided and the City has been providing solid waste removal to tent city since May 18, 2018. As well, the City is in discussions with the Environmental Health Officer on whether it's possible to comply with the part of the order to provide hand sanitizer.

While Council maintains the position this is an illegal trespass and has sent a request to the Provincial Health Officer to appeal the order, their decision to comply comes from many considerations. These include the expected increase of hot and dry weather over the next two weeks, the desire to ensure occupants have adequate toilet facilities given the recent increase in numbers and the need to prevent further contamination from human waste of 1 Port Drive and the general neighbourhood and relieve the strain on the surrounding business community and public washroom facilities.

"The Medical Health Officer's order is not a long term solution," said Mayor Bill McKay, "The occupants should be aware that this matter is proceeding to Court next week. Dismantling the tent city is a permanent solution to ensure public health and safety."

On July 5, Medical Health Officer, Dr. Paul Hasselback issued Provincial Health Orders to the City of Nanaimo to continue to provide solid waste services and, in addition, provide free flowing potable water, additional porta-potties and hand sanitizing stations by July 10, 2018 at 5 pm. Following discussions with the City, Dr Hasselback provided an extension until July 12, 2018.

The City will be heading to court next week to present their case for an injunction to evict occupants of tent city. The City, through legal counsel, has also sent a request to Dr. Hasselback. Legal counsel, Troy DeSouza added, "We urge the Medical Health Officer to make an eviction order to the occupants at the tent city to ensure their health and safety."

Attached to the online version of this release is a copy of a letter sent to the Medical Health Officer with a formal request by the City's legal counsel.

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