NEWS RELEASE

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Council Approves Health & Housing Action Plan and BC Housing Development Permit

Summary

Monday, February 22, 2021, was a busy day for Council as they had both a Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting and their Regular Council Meeting, later in the evening.

During their Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting, Council discussed the Health and Housing Action Plan. Later in the evening, during the Regular Council Meeting, Council endorsed the Action Plan along with next steps for implementation as recommended by the Health and Housing Task Force.

The Action plan highlights where the Nanaimo specific problems are, what service and resource gaps exist, and where help is needed the most. The recommendations from the Action Plan, include the:

- Creation of a Health and Housing Governance Board to oversee the implementation of the plan.
- Establishment of a Funders' Table with the aim of securing the $65.5M needed to meet Nanaimo's health and housing needs over the next five years. Key funding partners could include Island Health, BC Housing, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as these organizations have the appropriate mandates to support this work, and the Action Plan will equip the Funders' Table to be more effective in demonstrating needs and advocating for additional investment in Nanaimo.
- Formation of a Health and Housing Systems Planner Organization to help optimize current approaches and maximize return on investment.

To help move forward with the implementation of the Action Plan, Council directed City staff to establish a transition group to focus on the overall governance requirements, guide the implementation of the System Planner Organization, and report back to Council as soon as possible.

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition has also setup a website highlighting key points from the Action Plan, which includes the framework for action as well as next steps.

In addition to endorsing the Action Plan, Council approved the development permit for 702 Nicol Street, which was identified as a project under the BC Housing and City of Nanaimo MOU.

Strategic Link: Working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to be a livable, compassionate, and inclusive community for all.

Key Points

- The Health and Housing Action Plan has specific recommendations on how to improve the coordination of resources for vulnerable members of Nanaimo's community and identify where more resources are needed from various stakeholders.
- The foundation of the Health and Housing Action Plan is contingent on the willingness and ability of the various organizations working in Nanaimo to shift resources, change the ways they work, and to overall better coordinate to achieve collective priorities.

Quotes

"On behalf of Nanaimo City Council, I would like to thank Snuneymuxw First Nation, Service Canada, RCMP Nanaimo, Island Health, BC Housing, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Central Vancouver Island, Mid-Island Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Nanaimo Region of the John Howard Society, Dr. Alina Turner from HelpSeeker, our hard working City staff, and of course Councillors Bonner and Hemmens, for their work on the Health and Housing Action Plan. This plan builds on the Homelessness Action Plan and helps us map out how we can continue to work together in supporting our vulnerable population, which includes the homeless."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"No one agency or organization is responsible for tackling the complex problem around health and housing: it requires coordination and partnership, which this Plan maps out for all of us."

Erin Hemmens
Co-Chair, Health and Housing Task Force
City of Nanaimo

"The Health and Housing Action Plan represents 18 months of collaborative work and has given us a much more detailed picture of our need in Nanaimo, which as City Council, we will use to ensure our advocacy efforts are clear, data informed and responsive to community need."

Don Bonner
Co-Chair, Health and Housing Task Force
City of Nanaimo

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Contact:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community Planning
City of Nanaimo
Lisa.Bhopalsingh@nanaimo.ca
250-755-4464

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