

SRA meeting Wednesday, August 5, 2020 7-9 PM – Zoom Call

This meeting is a chance to ask questions, suggest solutions or give thoughts about the homeless camp in Strathcona Park. To give everyone a chance to speak, comments will be limited to two minutes and everyone will get a turn.

Brief update from Dan:

- Joining the meeting to answer questions will be Councillor Pete Fry, Alisma Perry from MLA Shane Simpson's office, and Inspector Lynn Noftle from the Vancouver Police Department.
- Dan and Katie have spoken recently with Mayor Stewart and Ministers Simpson and Mark, as well as camp organizers.
- Park Board bylaw not passed yet still needs to be re-visited, Sept 14
- Mayor said several hotels have been identified – Province responsibility – province is hoping feds will follow through on their commitment in 2017 – no funds flown – nothing from Selina Rob or Darcy – mayor recco'd contacting outside for help maybe Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan?
- What's the plan for 3 months?
- Campers are not allowing CoV in. SRA is Encouraging CoV to set up Navigation Site tomorrow.
- Media attention is beginning to get traction, to wake up politicians – keep writing

Resident: Just back after some time away – had to chase someone out of yard two days ago – why three-month timeline, seems to be some 'us against them' narrative from folks in camp – concerned – like wild west, what can we look forward to?

Robin: Crime has been an issue here long before this encampment came in, there is an us and them narrative – homelessness is a part of this community and always has been – can we be allies rather than looking at ways of shutting it down?

Resident: A lot of talk has addressed the needs of the campers – how are our needs being met, yes there was crime in the hood before, and the campers are members of community and they need to respect the code of neighbourhood conduct also

Andrew: property taxes don't give us more standing in Society than anyone else – this encampment represents a long-standing group of individuals that have been failed – some have residency in SROs and are choosing to live in a tent rather than an SRO in tremendous disrepair – need to acknowledge some are there by choice and some aren't – in Strathcona, we like the diversity not the homogenous offerings of other communities.

Greg: appreciate comments, encampments are people that have needs - doesn't agree that withholding tax is the solution - now the locus of crime has changed from Op. Park area to here – we are not equating crime and homelessness – we need to advocate for a solution with the camp and withholding tax is not a solution

Roberta: Is anyone communicating with the Chinese elderly people that used to regularly using the park? Katie has been in contact - Chinese seniors and social housing also

Resident: Camp has raised profile of particular problem – is causing some movement, hasn't heard any narrative around homeless shouldn't be here – but there are many counts of aggressive behaviour, parks have become drug trading points, that kind of activity is disturbing and we don't want to see it condoned here

Andrea Glickman: gave land acknowledgement – indigenous are over represented here, so it is appropriate. Clarified in media statements that SRA don't speak for all residents of Strathcona, camp should be considered residents – general assertions about increase in drug and crime activity, and has seen less of this and people experiencing homelessness in her area because these people have moved to Strathcona Park – advocacy needs to be more focussed – make sure camp is safe – tax withholding is media bait – CoV doesn't have a lot of capital, has offered land, all levels need to kick in feds need to come to table. Wants to see data – drug supply is crappy because of COVID, reports of increased crime. Summary: SRA needs to be transparent about comms, she's on the email list serve but didn't get the invite

Gisele: 10-year resident, curious of navigation Centre? Primarily about services? Surrey had similar thing on strip – they needed a place to take them to – ultimately housing all levels of government need to kick in – stay on the topic of housing. 60 bed facilities are entry points and can help steer these people to better place

Victoria Duffy – the reality is there is no housing, there is disproportionate wealth gap here – talking about housing is like the red herring about tax withholding – it will keep growing 300 becomes 700, this is beyond SRA to deal with – and we came into this neighbourhood as well. Is everyone in Strathcona a home owner, many home owners do come from diverse backgrounds – Dan: the truth of strath is there is more renters than in any other hood

Sarah – echo Vicky, been here six years, needs clear communication that the SRA does not rep hood – not in support of the push out

Jamie 'tax withholding guy': this petition should be viewed as resident led not 'Strathcona Resident Led' – encourage people to read doc and participate.

Dan: Challenge with SRA over last 17 years has been to be as inclusive as it would like to be, so that it can be more representative – we can only rep people that join the SRA and we would welcome anyone who lives here – invaluable to comm. These are not personal opinions this is the cumulative voice of the neighbourhood – many diverse opinions, we don't want to throw up our hands..

Amy: lived here since 1990 – renter, ok with people living where they need to live and the need for support for people. Has a point on communication landscape. What are the channels of communication currently? Read in a book around negotiation is need to look at interest and know how to neg. through a situation

Lisa: I'm sorry – my concern this week is crime – live on Hawks, in this past week – every single day has been a call to 911 – today there was an arson – I have been here since 1990 – blockwatch captain – there has been a serious uptick in crime – super stressful, she's been walking her neighbour to busstop – worried for her safety – I am not equating homelessness with criminals but that encampment is attracting criminal activity, which is escalating!

Julia: calling from Mau Dan not representing Mau Dan – lived in Co-op for 15 years intersection of DTES and Strathcona – has noticed a huge difference since it has moved on from Op. Park – doesn't want to question anyone's truth – concerned for everyone's safety, all experiencing negative impact of COVID, but none like the encampment is right now – talking recently with other co-ops, how lucky we are and that as a Co-op we recognise socio-economic equity within community. Here to listen – Hi!

Judith: Grandmother lives here – go on record that the camp is not a good environment for anyone – lot of mental health issues going on – crime – not just a housing issue – living in a tent is not a true home – all levels Govt need to create circumstance, so that all layers of this problem can be addressed – they don't have health care, they in jeopardy, they need more than this camp allows, and it's a shame that our govt. has let this become a neighbourhood issue – blight on city that it has expanded like this

Robin: there just is not housing – until we address that there will be encampments

Marion: feels very heard with Dan and his group – much more inclusive than it was before, there's always been homeless here – choice between a tent and SRO is not a good choice. Mental health issues have been here too – to tie it just to the encampment isn't fully true – she's a senior, walks with a cane and walks slowly and still feels safe – feels less safe with dogs off leash

Kelly Lcan: 12-year resident – wants to speak about the park and we live in a hood where one park is disserved, the other one out of commission – also the mental health of everyone in the neighborhood – the park is important for every one in the neighbourhood and that's not really being spoken of.

Penny: housing is big issue, not going away quickly – in meantime can campers be dispersed among all van parks, and not have this kind of concentration – to have smaller camps, better managed camps.

Andrew : concentration creates community – disperse doesn't help

Penny: ok so 350 tents currently, could 100 create community? Andrew: 300 is better than 100 if we reduce that's fine in 2/3 weeks we'll be up there again – we've seen it grow to 350 in very short time, not saying that Strathcona park is the best solution – a sanctioned camp would be a better solution – need to hold space for folks that are there now – love to hear from some of the people living in the camp. Have they been invited – yes some on call now, not responding – they **do not** feel that the size of the camp can be managed currently, and that it acts as a magnet for predators.

Resident: Feels unfair to everyone, terrible indictment for Canada

Bridgette, trouble joining – worried about the camp, particularly tents now on Prior and down Hawks, and wonder why? Has heard of illegal activity, that's what the people at the camp told Dan – has seen more violence and angst in the street – witnessed this on Campbell recently – drug dealers in the camp

Jamie Maclaren – share tax companion statement of support. Organizing a tax resistance campaign – a non-binding declaration that they will withhold taxes – request support for a safe and supportive camp that can accommodate 300. 4,000 units of true shelter and to increase the safety and mental health

support to Strath Community – includes camp and camp demands. Wants to get as many sig's before September due date and defer tax also works the same way

Dan will share document shortly

Marion Pollack: Concerned that CBC Radio may be here and limits free discussion –

Elvin: Want to clarify Navigation Centre

Mira: when are we going to hear from the mayor publicly?

Brit: comment to CBC not everyone on the call has consented, so no direct quotes -

Pete: not speaking for CoV, as a resident for over 30 years, everyone has unique perspective – what is scary to some may not be scary for others, this is now bigger than Op. Park at its peak and this is important to recognize for this community. It's a national issue - the City has done a lot of heavy lifting for housing, but prov and feds have main jurisdiction – covid has disallowed guests and exacerbated this crisis. Examples of successful camps are much smaller, less than 100. 50/60 seem to be able to be managed but need a lot of support – land that supports that degree of surface camping really only options that are available are parks – this is not sustainable in Strathcona Park – Navigation center Provincial announcement was disappointing – coming in 6 months is not going to do it – we need to start looking at other options – Provincence site has most potential right now – we need to triage folks from where they are to a better place. The criminal activity (Chopshops, Drugs, Crime) cannot be sanctioned in a camp, this needs to be articulated and named.

Tom: but by provisioning this camp aren't you de facto sanctioning it, other sites have been id'd?

Pete: It's basic Human rights and we have to, Tom: if you can furnish and equip it in a park, you can do it

Resident: what about the PNE, where the infrastructure exits? – Pete: this conversation is new for Strathcona but when it was in Op. Park the CoV heard lots of suggestions.

Resident: the PNE was used as staging area during interment we wouldn't want that history associated.

Trevor: Thanks Pete, for being only elected politicians to show face – none other have taken risk, Shane Simpson a couple times in media - haven't seen any other govt. rep show up. Dan: SRA has spoken to many elected officials and representatives.

Kelsey: Do you have a strategy for how to engage feds? Pete: Province is in best position to squeeze money out of the feds – keeping the conversation alive , media attention brings political attention. ;ets not see the terrible stuff happen in Op. Park in Strath Park – working with MST (SP?) it's not working right now need to provide triage

Marilou: Thanks, Pete – interested in VPD comments around how to not let the bad stuff happen?

Anyone clarify what the role of police is other than responding to 911? Pete? Backroom not clear on what they are doing, COV has no authority –

Andrew: outside workers of Vancouver, CoV has dedicated more resources/ litter collection/ working hard (at the instruction of the City) to support the public cleanliness and safety of the site – thanks, Pete – the City has land – need province and Feds to build infrastructure, residents should write letters about what's needed to support us, and our neighbours in the park.

Kelsey: Has question – need a plan to support request for funds, realizes that this is layered and tricky – is there no opportunity for some interim support or short-term options?

Pete: Shelters are not at capacity, some are not great, SROs are not adequate – Strathcona Park is an interim solution, providing water and toilets, but we can't let of the gas with Provincial appeal.

Kelsey: So Lexus have more rights than people in Vancouver, can we help – should we write?

Pete: there's a timeline to the Provenance site – Dan: best thing we can do is apply pressure to Province

Carla: question with regards to audit? We need a more thorough examination of potential for sanctioned sites, Creekside? Options for number of tents – housing is long term – need to ID places for this to go – as a group should we undertake this, would people be interested in this? is it a humane thing to do?

Pete: Van Map App shows City owned property. has seen smaller private camps work, faith based, church parking lots – this is how dignity village started – CoV could loosen permits for this.

Raff: Camp looked nice at first, clean, organized and become worse and worse and worse – and then war zone. Camp managers have said they can't manage – how can Strathcona Park stay clean? It will grow and will keep growing, will take at least a year to disperse – doesn't mind this community happening – would like to hear opinion from tent city.

Resident: Has to have Police oversight. Op. Park led to a murder – this is not safe, there is drugs, trafficking and stealing. The police can't turn a blind eye to this – if there is a theft we call the police – there is no police oversight – 30 minutes ago a garage was set on fire, we can't consider it a community without policing, without infrastructure, medical and social workers.

Dan: Everyone in the camp is not the same, a couple people who like to start fires, steal someone that just needs shelter, but social norms is the definition of community –

Resident: Recognizing that the campers are at risk –

Amy: willing to help people connect, Mau Dan Co-Op is considering training, de-escalation training etc.. to try to have better outcomes in the challenging situations.

Dan: SRA welcomes every effort to build community –

Janmarie: Strathcona resident since '86 – this conversation is bringing out the best in us SRA – incredible potential for this group of people to something awesome, the buck stops here – leverage the

intelligence and experience in this comm. This could have a new articulation in this time – we are not able to shut of the tap of poverty – we could provide positive transitional opportunities to those who have not had that opportunity. Noticed that there is an escalation of fear, a shared fear – how to provide safety? There are many forms – police on bikes? Buddy up with police ar camp person, we may be able to relax enough to address this with different language.

Dan: Thanks to all – keep moving forward.