



The Salvation Army Pidcock House **Good Neighbour Agreement Community Meeting**

Date: October 3, 2012

Attendance: Inspector Blair McDonald (*RCMP, OIC*), Diane Linker (*Constituency office representative for MLA Dom McRae*), Pastor Darryl Burry (*Executive Director – The Salvation Army Comox Valley Ministries*), Brent Hobden (*Community Ministries Director*), Colleen Holden (*Family Services Supervisor*), Lorrie Cox (*Pidcock House Supervisor*), Juli Butler (*Thrift Store Manager*), Alastair Hunting (*Caseworker/ Chaplin*), and 4 members from the neighbourhood (12 total in attendance)

Welcome by Pastor Darryl Burry and introduction of staff from The Salvation Army.

Introduction of Invited Guests and Dignitaries by Brent Hobden.

Pastor Darryl gave a brief explanation of the Good Neighbour Agreement and outlined how the meeting would progress. Each of the points were read and then there was time allotted for discussion. The GNA was signed on Oct. 4, 2012 by The Salvation Army and then Mayor of Courtenay Greg Phelps.

Noise and Disorder

- 1. The Salvation Army shall undertake to patrol the property around Pidcock House during hours of operation to ensure patrons do not loiter in close proximity to the premises.**
- 2. The Salvation Army shall undertake to monitor patrons smoking outside the premises to minimize possible impacts to pedestrians and the neighbourhood.**
- 3. The Salvation Army shall undertake to monitor and promote the orderly conduct of patrons immediately outside the premises, particularly those congregating outside during open hours, and to discourage patrons from engaging in behaviour that may disturb the peace, quiet and enjoyment of the neighbourhood.**
- 4. The Salvation Army shall undertake to ensure that noise emissions from the premises do not disturb surrounding businesses, residents and neighbours, as provided by the City of Courtenay Noise Bylaw.**

Q. Neighbour: What can be done to monitor the people smoking outside? They are sometimes loud and just before I came to the meeting today, two of the residents were fighting.

A. Pastor Darryl spoke about the security checks that are being performed on a regular basis. Lorrie mentioned during dinner times it's sometimes difficult to keep aware of everything that is going on, especially outside. Lorrie thanked the neighbours for helping shelter staff to monitor what is happening on the shelter grounds and in the neighbourhood.

Q. Neighbour: Why isn't there more staff to monitor noise levels? What are the consequences if guests are being loud?

A. Brent: We do try very hard to keep a close eye on our guests. We keep log book of when our staff do security checks of the property.

A. Lorrie: We also have a warning system where guests face restriction if they are excessively loud. We also have great volunteers that help us with our patrols. We are trying to have at least one volunteer on shift each night. We leave the windows open to listen for disturbances outside.

Q. Neighbour: If the shelter is full, do staff give out sleeping bags?

A. Lorrie: We have a new sign-out system in place. When all beds are full, our guests are given a sleeping bag or blankets. They are required to bring them back.

Q. Neighbour: If you give sleeping bags isn't it encouraging guests to camp out in the neighbourhood? We are seeing places where campsites are being setup in the park beside the railroad tracks. We see lots of garbage, human waste and I don't feel safe. Isn't it illegal for people to camp in the parks?

A. Inspector Blair McDonald: It's not a crime, but there most likely are bylaws to prevent this from happening on a regular basis.

A. Pastor Darryl: We have had a significant increase of people using the shelter. We recognize there is a need for a larger facility. Pastor Darryl shared the recent stats for the shelter and highlighted the fact that 54 people were turned away in September and that we are significantly higher in occupancy than what the Emergency Shelter was designed for.

A. Brent: Services in the Valley are not sufficient but we make the best of the resources we have. TSA is fighting hard to get a new shelter; we have strong support from many people and organizations. It is well recognized that shelter space is significantly less than most communities in BC.

Q. Neighbour: How is this human dignity? We're being told we have to deal with it - it's outrageous that we only have one shelter in the Valley with 17 beds.

A. Brent: I would encourage you to contact City Council and to attend a council meeting. Meeting dates are posted on the city website. I would encourage you to attend meetings of the Comox Valley Homelessness Task force and to contact BC Housing.

Neighbour: It's a big burden on our neighborhood having a cluster of agencies so close together. Land was purchased downtown and the business owners managed to get a new shelter stopped.

Criminal Activity

5. The Salvation Army shall not tolerate any criminal activity within the premises. The Salvation Army shall make every reasonable effort to scrutinize patrons as they enter the building to ensure that no items of contraband, including weapons and controlled substances, are brought onto the premises.

Lorrie: When guests arrive, staff members check each guests personal belongings to ensure all policies and procedures are being followed.

(no questions or concerns were brought forth)

Cleanliness

6. The Salvation Army shall assign staff to inspect the outside of the premises each night to ensure that there is no litter, garbage or other foreign objects associated with the premises left within the general area of the Pidcock House.

7. The Salvation Army shall undertake to remove, as soon as practicable, any graffiti from the building's exterior.

Q. Neighbour: The stuff being left in the camp sites is coming from the shelter. The tents and sleeping bags should be cleaned up by staff.

A. Darryl: Some of that material may have originated from shelter, however this cannot be verified as individuals do have their own personal tents, sleeping bags, etc. This one of the reasons we implemented the sign-out process for guests receiving blankets and sleeping bags. TSA will contact the city to see if it is possible to have the canopy raised on the bushes where the homeless are sleeping. This could help to clean the area up.

Neighbour: "I go for walks every day along the railroad tracks and I don't see a lot of garbage along trail".

Volume and Hours of Service

8. The Salvation Army shall undertake to limit the number of meals provided to 25 individuals during any meal period, increases in service will be in consultation with the City (exceptions for holidays ie. Christmas, Easter).

9. The Salvation Army shall not permit the Pidcock House patrons to remain on the premises outside of approved hours.

(no questions or concerns were brought forth)

Communication with Neighbours and the City

10. The Salvation Army shall undertake to work with the community and the City to resolve issues which may arise in the neighbourhood regarding the operation of the Pidcock House or the conduct of its patrons.

11. The Salvation Army shall undertake to inform the City of any changes in management.

12. The Salvation Army shall undertake to develop an orientation plan to train and educate new staff and patrons of the principles of this agreement.

Q. Neighbour: I don't see anything being done. How do you deal with complaints?

A. Brent: We have received a total of 5 complaints and each one has been addressed. If you bring forth a complaint it is addressed. You won't know how the situation has been resolved but you will get notice that it has been taken care of.

Colleen: TSA is very good at following through with complaints.

Q. Blair (RCMP): How are these expectations communicated to guests?

A. Lorrie: During intake the guests are made aware of their rights and the expectations that we have of them.

Amendment and Transferability

13. Any proposed changes to the terms of the Good Neighbour Agreement shall be discussed and resolved among the Parties. Any of the parties may request a meeting to revise the conditions of this agreement within six months of its coming into effect.

(no questions or concerns were brought forth)

Enforcement

The Pidcock House, and the City of Courtenay recognize the participation in this agreement is voluntary and that its success is based on voluntary compliance. Notwithstanding the voluntary nature of this agreement, the Pidcock House recognizes that non-compliance with the terms of this agreement may be brought to the attention of City Council.

There is recognition that city bylaws, and other statutes and legislation shall at all times take precedence over this agreement.

WHEREAS the Pidcock House has voluntarily entered into this agreement, the City of Courtenay commends them for their recognition of their civic responsibilities and their commitment to fostering a good working relationship with the City and their neighbours.

(no questions or concerns were brought forth)

Pastor Darryl asked if there were any additional questions or concerns:

Q. Neighbour: Is there a transition house for women?

A. Lorrie: Yes, Lilly House, I believe they have approximately 14 regular beds and 2 detox beds.

Q. Neighbour: I am surprised by the lack of facilities. There should be more sharing of the homeless responsibility in Courtenay. I don't understand how the downtown and business area was able to axe the shelter. Why isn't BC Housing doing something about this?

A. Darryl: The Community needs to come up with a plan. BC Housing will not initiate the process. This community hasn't made the plan yet. Until consensus is reached we will not see any progress towards a new facility.

Q. Neighbour: Is there a lack of political will?

A. Darryl: Can't speak for city. The Salvation Army has a desire to ensure the homeless population is cared for. We have expressed a desire to work together with agencies and elected officials to address the problem.

Neighbour: We have to help people - we need proper facility.

Darryl: If you are interested on looking at the current statistics for the shelter, I will leave a copy at the front. Please feel free to ask questions. Thank-you for coming!