

Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
General Coalition Meeting
June 2nd, 2021

Attendees: Brooke (WorkBC), Sandra Viney (DCBIA), Bunny Shannon (CV Social Planning Society), Roger Kishi (Wachiay Friendship Centre), Shana (Sasamans), Katherine, Richard Clarke (Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society), Patti Alvarado and Verna (Indigenous Women's Sharing Society), Shari Dunnet (CV Community Action Team), Jamie, Leah Read (MHSU), Destanee Harrison (CV Transition Society), Ally Reeder (Indigenous Women's Sharing Society), Joyce Wilson (St. George's United Church), Karen Mackinnon (Habitat for Humanity), Ann Janssen (CV Affordable Housing Society), Carrera Teal (CV Chamber of Commerce), Rachel Ducommon (John Howard Society), Toyin Kareem (Immigrant Welcome Centre), Pat McKenna (Habitat for Humanity), Betty Tate (CV Early Years Collaborative), Charlene Everson (K'omoks First Nation), Katie Barker (Division of Family Practice), Sam Franey (Unhoused Society), Nicole

Facilitator: Heather Ney (CV Transition Society)

Recorder: Andrea Cupelli (Coordinator)

1. Coalition Coordinator Update

- a. Andrea's last day June 25th
- b. Will be hiring a replacement – working on job posting and will have it out asap – please share widely with your networks

2. Leadership Team Membership interest for 2021-22 year

- a. Betty, Heather, Roger and Brent will remain on the team
- b. Still looking for 2 new Leadership Team members to start in the Fall term. Still 2 more meetings to vote interested members in.
- c. If interested, please let Andrea know asap

3. Meeting with Housing Minister David Eby Update

- a. LT met with Min. David Eby, Shane Ramsay, Malcolm McNaughton, Heidi Hartman from BC Housing, MLA Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA Josie Osborne, City of Courtenay Councilor Doug Hillian
- b. Meeting was in response to the Housing Proposal we sent back in January asking for immediate emergency shelter spaces as well as more purpose built supportive housing
- c. Discussed the potential for supportive housing including purpose-built shelter – but this is years down the road
- d. Need for more immediate supports re: shelter
- e. City of Courtenay will be meeting with David Eby in the next 2 weeks
- f. Coalition will be meeting with BC Housing to talk about budgets for immediate supports

4. Connect/Shelter Update

- a. Still very busy and many turn aways each night (5-15) and programming busy during the day
- b. Lots of benefit to having people there early in the morning before they start their day for relationship building, goal planning, meals etc

- c. EWR started in February and negotiating with BC Housing to continue to fund these 10 mats.
- d. Still waiting on UBCM grant – should hear back in July. 1.2 million dollars to go towards a shelter/Connect, increased outreach, community engagement, and trauma-informed/ cultural humility training opportunities
- e. City dispersed people from the Connect parking lot on May 26 to clean up the site, cut back bushes etc
 - i. RCMP and Bylaw will be attending each morning to move people along
 - ii. Response to interests of downtown businesses - people are feeling vulnerable, frustrated, and scared
 - iii. So far most folks have moved across the street. There is nowhere for people to go!
 - iv. Everyone is doing their best to address a very complex situation and there are no easy answers. We are all community
 - v. Outreach workers are reporting that their clients are feeling dehumanized, unsafe, are having belongings taken away/thrown out by RCMP and Bylaw, and feel ostracized from the community
 - vi. Things are getting worse out there
 - vii. Hope is a double edged sword – if we give hope to folks we need to be able to back it up or it is re-traumatizing
- f. 97 people currently on the waitlist to get into The Junction
- g. Question as to whether local churches are involved in helping out
 - i. St. George's is a cornerstone service with Sonshine Lunch Club, Living Hope church has helped Coalition to partner on some funding proposals to get people in motel rooms at the start of the pandemic
- h. Can we share some positive stories from folks who have been helped by Connect? Show how these programs have positively impacted people.
 - i. Physician Outreach program, partnership with MHSU, collaboration across agencies – all a huge win!
- i. Proposed an idea of a Solidarity Walk
 - i. Could be easy to plan. Walk beside our houseless community members and draw attention to the issues
- j. Coalition's Public Awareness Team needs to be re-invigorated

5. LLE Team Planning Group

- a. Reminder that this is a planning group, not the actual new team. Looking for people to help connect with folks who may be interested in participating and planning a first big meeting
- b. When we talk about people with lived/living experience of homelessness the LT recommends using the guidelines of how folks are counted into the Homeless Counts.
 - i. Unhoused, couch surfing, precariously/dangerously housed or having had past experiences in life with this
 - ii. Keeps the goals consistent.
 - iii. We recognize people who are housed but who live on the margins and the Poverty Reduction Plan will hopefully have some groups for folks with lived and living experience of poverty

- c. Thanks to those who have expressed interest in the planning group, still looking for a few other members, ideally frontline and/or someone with lived experience
- d. Let Andrea know by June 11th, then will figure out meeting times etc

6. PAT - Community Engagement/Anti-stigma

- a. Been a significant uptick in stigmatizing social media posts, emails, meetings etc
- b. Would like to address stigma of homelessness and also partner with other groups to address the stigma of substance use, and also share positive stories
- c. If your organization has stories they would like to share please contact Andrea
- d. Time to re-vamp the Public Awareness Team to tackle this! If you are interested in being on this working group of the Coalition please let Andrea know. Andrea will also send an email with details.
- e. Working group members don't need to be reps of member agencies and can be from advisory, or individuals

7. Other Updates

a. Habitat for Humanity

- i. Pat McKenna is stepping down from the ED role and moving back to Nova Scotia. You will be missed Pat and thank you for your contributions to this community through Habitat and Town of Comox

b. Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

- i. Donna May – has an elderly client who has been placed in assisted living housing and is in need of household items and furniture

c. BC Housing Community Housing Fund

- i. CV Transition Society/D2D, Wachiay Friendship Centre, CV Affordable Housing Society and City of Courtenay have all submitted applications for this fund. Still waiting for announcements!

d. Comox Valley Addictions Clinic has opened by Dr. Eva Hammerich and is accepting patients for OAT etc.

- i. Sam has been hired as a Peer Support Worker

e. Community Action Team

- i. Our community is lacking a Safe Inhalation site so they are advocating for this much needed service
- ii. Still doing drug testing
- iii. Comox Valley Street Outreach doing peer outreach programs and responding to a lot of drug poisonings

f. Thanks to all the folks with lived/living experience of homelessness for bringing forward their voices, perspectives and wisdom to the meeting today.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 7, 2021, 12pm via Zoom