



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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September 15, 2021

Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community

Dear Members of the Select Committee,

On September 13, 2021, Mr. Todd Corrigan sent an email to Council and City Administration “on behalf of the majority of members from the Mayor’s Select Committee for a Safe, Clean and Inclusive Community.” I am pleased to respond to the issues identified in the correspondence.

As reflected by the [meeting minutes](#) from its January 5 meeting, the Select Committee unanimously approved its Report to Council that included key commitments relating to coordinated advocacy, service coordination, and an evaluation of the City’s Downtown Service Enhancement Package. The report had several appendices including:

- Minutes from the December 2, 2019 Council meeting at which Council received public feedback on issues and opportunities to further inform the City’s response to the social issues throughout Prince George with a focus on downtown;
- A December 16, 2019 Council Delegation presentation prepared and delivered by the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Prince George, and the Gateway and;
- Verbatim data from the September 15, 2020 Select Committee Workshop facilitated by Urban Matters.

The appendices accurately document ideas shared by the public and members of the Select Committee. These ideas, including the development of the Situation Table and “Downtown Public Safety Office,” were discussed at the facilitated workshop and informed the commitments approved by the Committee and Council.

The letter forwarded by Mr. Corrigan also referenced a news release that was prepared by the City to announce its receipt of \$1.9 million of funding from the Strengthening Communities’ Services grant stream. The news release, attached, does not state that the Select Committee was consulted in relation to the grant application. Rather, the news release acknowledges that the establishment of the Hub was one of the key commitments approved by Council that was contained in the report from the Select Committee.

It is important to note that the City invited agencies including the RCMP, Downtown Prince George, Northern Health, BC Housing, and the Prince George Native Friendship Centre to provide suggestions regarding the City’s grant application. These agencies were selected to provide input as their services most closely aligned with the grant criteria that was heavily weighted toward services for the unsheltered homeless and community concerns regarding cleanliness and safety.

In relation to “downtown civic security,” Administration did act on the Select Committee’s advice to reallocate \$400,000 of the Downtown and Area Service Enhancement Package from Civic Facilities for security costs to Bylaw Services to enable the hiring of four additional Bylaw Enforcement Officers. Council approved the reallocation in January, which means there is a Bylaw presence in the downtown and area seven days per week from 7:00am to 11:00pm.

However, the need for security - particularly in city parkades - continued and, in fact, greatly increased through the COVID-19 response period. The Strengthening Communities grant is intended to support local governments by providing bridge funding for the period between the COVID-19 outbreak and the post-COVID recovery period. As a result, the City was able to retroactively claim the security expenses it incurred to keep members of the public safe when utilizing the parkades.

The City of Prince George extended the term of the Select Committee to ensure its ability to provide updates as the City proceeded, in partnership with many external agencies, with its implementation of the Strengthening Communities’ Program grant. In addition, the Select Committee’s report to Council included commitments made by seven represented agencies including BC Housing, Northern Health, the RCMP, PGNFC, AWAC, Downtown Prince George, and the Prince George Chamber of Commerce.

It is important to continue to provide an opportunity for those agencies to update the Committee on progress and to invite other members, including those representing the Prince George Business Owners Advocacy Group, the Gateway Business Improvement Association, and the community to share information regarding their commitments to ensuring a safe, clean, and inclusive community.

A meeting of the Select Committee will be convened in early October; all members of Council are invited to attend that meeting in their ex-officio capacity. The City looks forward to the opportunity to further address issues, concerns, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration.
Sincerely,



Mayor Lyn Hall
City of Prince George



SELECT COMMITTEE ON A SAFE, CLEAN AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Minutes of the City of Prince George Select Committee on A Safe, Clean and Inclusive Community meeting, held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 1100 Patricia Boulevard, Prince George, BC on January 5, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

IN-PERSON

Mayor Lyn Hall (Chair); Mr. Daniel Roy; and Mr. Malachy Tohill.

VIA ZOOM:

Mr. John Zukowski <Alternate to Mr. Bernie Schneider, Prince George Business Owners Advocacy Group>; Ms. Connie Abe; Supt. Shaun Wright, RCMP; Ms. Barb Ward-Burkitt <12:00 p.m. to 1:24 p.m.>; Mr. Eoin Foley, Downtown Prince George; Mr. Todd Corrigan; Mr. David McMullen; Ms. Lynne Brown; Mr. Paul Burry; and Mr. Dan Denis.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Terri McConnachie <via ZOOM>; Councillor Garth Frizzell ><via ZOOM>; Councillor Cori Ramsay <via ZOOM> <12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.>; Councillor Frank Everitt <via ZOOM> <12:10 p.m. to 1:28 p.m.>; Councillor Susan Scott; Councillor Murry Krause; Mr. Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager/Staff Liaison; Ms. Chris Bone, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships/ Staff Liaison; Mr. Ian Wells, Acting Deputy City Manager; Ms. Leslie Kellett, Legislative Coordinator.

GUESTS:

Ms. Colleen Van Mook <Alternate Member for Downtown Prince George>.

A. Commencement

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

B. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Mr. Corrigan, seconded by Mr. Zukowski that the agenda for the January 5, 2021 Select Committee on A Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community, BE ADOPTED.

Carried Unanimously

C. Adoption of Minutes

C.1 Minutes for the Select Committee on A Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community Meeting Held February 18, 2020

Moved by Mr. Corrigan, seconded by Mr. Zukowski, that the minutes from the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community meeting held February 18, 2020, BE ADOPTED.

C.2 For Information Only: Summary of Committee work between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020

Councillor Everitt joined the meeting via ZOOM at 12:10 p.m.

D. New Business

D.1 Draft Report on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community

Ms. Chris Bone, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, provided an overview of the draft report including recommendations of the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean and Inclusive Community regarding the City of Prince George Key Commitments.

Discussion commenced.

Ms. Barb-Ward Burkitt, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, proposed amendments regarding the Prince George Native Friendship Centre's commitments, as follows:

- PGNFC commits to continuing to provide shelter and outreach supports that include wellness checks, winter clothing, pain control, dental clinic services, personal storage services, and other supports specific to marginalized and vulnerable people in the community of Prince George.
- PGNFC outreach workers will work collaboratively with other outreach workers in the community (AWAC) and will continue to work closely with Bylaw Services, the RCMP, NH (Mental Health and Substance Use) to connect individuals to community services, supports and housing.

Mr. Graham Hall, Northern Health, proposed amendments regarding Northern Health's commitments to add:

- Expand staffing and access to Harm Reduction Services with the creation of an Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment (IOAT) program; and

edit the bullet regarding collaboration with the RCMP, as follows:

- Work in collaboration with the RCMP in a partnered approach to service delivery in the downtown and through the public safety office and be inclusive of our RCMP partners in the delivery of Harm Reduction Services provision planning.

Mr. Malachy Tohill, BC Housing, proposed an amendment regarding BC Housing's commitments by amending the first bullet to state:

- Deliver supportive housing units.

Discussion commenced regarding budget allocation as it relates to recommendations of the committee. Mr. Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager, responded to questions of the Committee.

Information regarding Northern Health's reference to IOAT can be found on the BC Centre on Substance Use [FAQ](#) page.

Moved by Mr. Tohill, seconded by Ms. Ward-Burkitt, that the Committee APPROVES the report to Council attached to the January 5, 2021 committee agenda with the following amendments:

1. To amend the bullets on page 14 regarding the commitments of Prince George Native Health as:
 - PGNFC commits to continuing to provide shelter and outreach supports that include wellness checks, winter clothing, pain control, dental clinic services, personal storage services, and other supports specific to marginalized and vulnerable people in the community of Prince George.
 - PGNFC outreach workers will work collaboratively with other outreach workers in the community (AWAC) and will continue to work closely with Bylaw Services, the RCMP, NH (Mental Health and Substance Use) to connect individuals to community services, supports and housing;
2. To add a bullet on page 13 regarding the commitments of Northern Health as:
 - Expand staffing and access to Harm Reduction Services with the creation of an Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment (IOAT) program;
3. To amend the last bullet on page 13 regarding the commitments of Northern Health as:
 - Work in collaboration with the RCMP in a partnered approach to service delivery in the downtown and through the public safety office and be inclusive of our RCMP partners in the delivery of Harm Reduction Services provision planning; and
4. To amend the first bullet on page 13 regarding the commitments of BC Housing as:
 - Deliver supportive housing units.

Carried Unanimously

Councillor Ramsay exited the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

D.2 Next Steps

The Committee discussed the next step of the committee being the presentation of the report to Council by the Chair, Mayor Lyn Hall, at the January 11, 2021 regular Council meeting.

The Committee discussed the role of committee members in terms of advocating for change and support on the local, regional, provincial, and national level.

Discussion commenced regarding the scheduling of a meeting the first week of February, as a meeting at which the City will report to the committee on the outcome of the January 11, 2021 regular Council meeting and the 2021 budget deliberations.

Ms. Ward-Burkitt exited the meeting at 1:24 p.m.


E. Information Items

E.1 Select Committee on Poverty Reduction Update – Councillor Murry Krause, Chair

Councillor Murry Krause, Chair of the Select Committee on Poverty Reduction, provided an update regarding the work of the committee stating that the Select Committee on Poverty Reduction will be presenting to Council at their January 11, 2021 regular Council meeting a report and preliminary recommendations of the committee as well as an engagement strategy that will commence in February 2021.

F. Adjournment

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON A SAFE, CLEAN, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:28 P.M.



Mayor Lyn Hall, Chair



Ms. Leslie Kellett, Legislative Coordinator



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | August 12, 2021

DOWNTOWN HEALTH, SAFETY, AND CLEANLINESS INITIATIVES BOLSTERED BY NEARLY \$2 MILLION IN FUNDING

Downtown community cleanliness, safety, and health in Prince George will benefit after nearly \$2 Million in Provincial and Federal Government funding was [announced today](#) for the City of Prince George's Community Safety Hub.

The Community Safety Hub, [which opened on April 6](#) on 2nd Avenue and George Street, serves as a critical connection point for many of the core agencies across governments and non-profit sectors that regularly contend with some of society's most complex issues. The establishment of the Hub was one of the key commitments approved by Council that are contained in a [report](#) from the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community.

The \$1,907,593.00 in funding, which is allocated via the Union of BC Municipalities' Strengthening Communities Services Grant Program, will be used by the City of Prince George in several important ways:

- Further establishment of the Community Safety Hub (site renovations, staffing, janitorial services, and utilities)
- Increased RCMP patrols
- Security (civic facilities and parkades)
- Establishment of a Mini Transfer Station (to assist Parks and Bylaw staff to deposit and sort daily cleanups)
- Enhanced cleaning
- Service/Drop In Centre for unsheltered homeless population and comprehensive evaluation

As the City continues to implement the activities associated with this funding, the Community Safety Hub will continue to operate as a centre for downtown health and safety service coordination. The partner organizations involved with the Community Safety Hub include:

- City of Prince George (Bylaw Services)
- Northern Health
- BC Housing
- RCMP including the Downtown Safety Unit
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre
- Downtown Prince George
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction



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These organizations have come together to address a number of issues, including the health and safety of the residents of downtown encampments and enhanced cleaning protocols in the downtown area. A number of unsheltered homeless individuals have been connected with income assistance, services, and housing.

Further information about health, safety, and cleanliness initiatives implemented by the City of Prince George in the downtown area is available on the [City website](#).

[Visit the Province of BC media release.](#)

Background

Like every community, Prince George is managing complex social issues associated with two concurrent health emergencies: the ongoing opioid overdose crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The response has involved multiple government ministries, Northern Health, the RCMP, the business sector, and numerous community-based organizations all working to improve the health and safety of the unsheltered homeless while addressing related community impacts.

To address persistent and multi-faceted social issues like homelessness, substance use, and mental illness, responding agencies must connect and communicate to ensure their activities are coordinated. With this goal in mind, the City of Prince George, in collaboration with its partners, launched the Community Safety Hub to enhance and support multi-jurisdictional service coordination.

While the uses for the Hub are still evolving, the location provides flexible work and meeting space for City Bylaw Services, Northern Health, BC Housing, RCMP including the Downtown Safety Unit, the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Downtown Prince George, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and more.

Notably, the Hub is not a “public facing” office and members of the public should contact participating agencies directly through their established communication channels (e.g. dialing 9-1-1 during an emergency or 3-1-1 to reach the City’s Service Centre) to report a problem or request further information.

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