
From: Amelia Merrick [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, July 10, 2022 10:06 PM
To: mayorandcouncil; cityclerk; Babicz, Walter; Davey, Adam
Subject: Questions Regarding Centralized Encampment Management

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FOR OFFICIAL INCLUSION IN COUNCIL MINUTES

Dear Mayor and Council,
Cc: Walter Baticz, Adam Davey

I write to you as a citizen of Prince George.

I can't imagine how difficult it is to manage complex, heated debates about the use of our public spaces. While we acknowledge the protected right to "life, liberty and security of the person," the ability of our governments, communities and families to secure those rights are increasingly under threat. Respectful of the complicated decisions you must make, I write to you regarding the proposal for Centralized Encampment Management.

There are two aspects of the plan that I would like to address. The first is regarding the allocation of temporary overnight shelters. The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Humanitarian Response offers very useful minimum standards to support decision-making in humanitarian crises like ours. According to the "SPHERE Standard," each person should be designated 5.5 square meters of space and should be provided a minimum of 15 litres of clean water per person per day (<https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere>).

There are several other applicable standards but as you debate which parks to designate as temporary overnight shelters, I would encourage you to consider the necessary space allocation and access to water. **When people are overcrowded there are public health risks (communicable diseases), environmental threats (degradation, landslide, garbage) and an increased likelihood of conflict.**

My second concern is regarding the proposed educational approach to compliance. I *can* imagine the frustration when it was found that education and supports were not "always sufficient to manage problematic behaviors" and that the city has limited resources, expertise and jurisdiction to "solve" complex problems. As an adult educator, I also recognize the limitations of education and would suggest that more of the same will not change the results.

That said, I would recommend that attention be paid to both the curriculum and pedagogy that undergirds your approach to "conversational education." I have a few questions:

1. Have you consulted experts in adult education to design your educational approach? Do they have expertise in trauma-informed and culturally-agile learning practices?
2. How does the curriculum reflect trauma-informed and culturally-sensitive practices?

3. Have Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless people been consulted to test your curriculum and learning resources?
4. Who created the curriculum to train bylaw officers so that they can better connect citizens to services and resources? Based on affidavits from the 2022 court case, it appears that RCMP lists of resources are out of date. Who is keeping the bylaw list of services and resources up to date? Are these resources publicly available?
5. Who will deliver the learning program to de-housed and precariously housed citizens, to inform them of the temporary shelters, of bylaws or how to retrieve belongings that are removed? According to “‘Move On’ The First Ninety-Nine Days of the City of Prince George Safe Streets Bylaw report,” the City’s approach to education is ad hoc (page 3 - <https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/docs/reports-presentations/march%2020%20final%20MOVE%20ON%20PG%20Bylaw%20report%20Hermer.pdf>). Furthermore, because of past traumatic experiences with bylaw, RCMP and other uniformed personnel, learning is often compromised. I would strongly recommend that you consider an intentional peer-based approach to learning instead.
6. What documents and resources will be available to support an educational approach to compliance? Will these be in plain-language and include useful and tested illustrations for people across literacy levels? Will these resources be available after hours for people who are trying to stay “out of sight”?

I would be happy to further discuss these questions and I am available to provide support to the City as you develop a sound approach to both the curriculum and pedagogy for a safer, cleaner and more inclusive PG.

Respectfully,
Dr. Amelia F. Merrick
PhD in Adult Education and Community Development

In pursuit of powerful collective knowledge. Together, thinking new ideas, thinking the unthinkable!