

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7.18

MEETING DATE: April 18, 2023

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: Wellness Centre DATE: April 5, 2023

DEPARTMENT: Public Safety & Social Development PREPARED BY: Holly Ferris

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

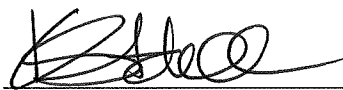
On November 9, 2023, Council passed a policy resolution to facilitate the opening of a Wellness Centre at 45951 Trethewey Avenue. Council is now asked to consider an extension of that resolution to support the continued operation of the Centre at this location, through to December 31, 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

Whereas a daytime wellness centre is still urgently needed to accommodate and support many people who are living precariously throughout the City in makeshift camps or on the streets, with a significant negative impact to themselves and the surrounding community;

And whereas, funding has been made available through partnerships with BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, Reaching Home, and UBCM to support the operations of a wellness centre through to December 31, 2023, and the Fire Chief has inspected the building and concluded that there are no immediate life safety concerns;

Be it resolved that Council make a policy decision not to enforce the Zoning Bylaw or BC Building Code for this specific use at 45951 Trethewey Avenue until December 31, 2023.



Karen Stanton
Director, Public Safety & Social Development

**3. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S
RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:**

Supports recommendation.



Chris Crosman, CAO

**STAFF REPORT ON
WELLNESS CENTRE**

PREPARED BY:	<u>Holly Ferris</u>	DATE:	<u>April 5, 2023</u>
POSITION:	<u>Manager of Social Development</u>	DEPARTMENT:	<u>Public Safety & Social Development</u>

1. DEFINITION OF ISSUE:

On November 9, 2023, Council passed a policy resolution to facilitate the opening of a Wellness Centre at 45951 Trethewey Avenue. Council is now asked to consider an extension of that resolution to support the continued operation of the Centre at this location, through to December 31, 2023.

2. FACTORS:

- 2.1 Through the Community Safety Plan and the ongoing work of the Community Response Team and Street Outreach, it was determined that the establishment of a culturally safe, trauma informed day centre with wrap around supports would help support the improved health, safety, and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness. It would also meet the City's long-standing vision for a one-stop contact centre.
- 2.2 Providing day space and wrap around supports when needed is critical to support individuals experiencing homelessness, improving their health and wellness, and chances of housing success. This project aligns with best practices, and federal Reaching Home directives and objectives for reducing homelessness. Working with local stakeholders to provide timely solutions to increased challenges pertaining to unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in the community also supports a safer community for all.
- 2.3 Funding from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, and Reaching Home was secured by the City last year to support the establishment, and one years' operation of the Wellness Centre. Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS), through a request for proposals process, was selected to be the operator. An extensive site location process took place over a number of months, ultimately leading to only one option, a building at 45951 Trethewey Avenue. To support this use at this location, on November 9, 2022, Council considered, and subsequently passed, a resolution not to enforce the Zoning Bylaw or BC Building Code for this specific use, for a period of six months, provided that there were no immediate life safety concerns (determined by the Fire Chief through inspection).

- 2.4 PCRS subsequently negotiated a lease with the property owner, obtaining building occupancy in early December. Renovations were undertaken to create additional office space for service providers, paint interior spaces, create storage space, and put in laundry facilities. Furniture and supplies were acquired, staff positions were posted and filled, and training took place so that the Centre could open on January 17, 2023.
- 2.5 The Wellness Centre staff work closely with Fraser Health services including medical care, substance use services, youth serving organizations, and other government agencies to connect individuals experiencing homelessness in a meaningful and effective way. Through this assistance, three individuals have been able to access housing.
- 2.6 Pacific Community Resources Society staff have been pro-active in their outreach to neighbours of the centre and work closely with the City, BC Housing, RCMP, and Griffin Security to respond to questions or concerns as they arise regarding the Centre's operations.
- 2.7 Recognizing that the current location is temporary, staff are involved in ongoing discussions with project partners regarding the need for a longer-term solution and sustainable funding to better assist community members who are experiencing homelessness to access needed services.

3. RECOMMENDATION & SUBSTANTIATION:

Recommendation:

Whereas a daytime wellness centre is still urgently needed to accommodate and support many people who are living precariously throughout the City in makeshift camps or on the streets, with significant negative impact to themselves and the surrounding community;

And whereas, funding has been made available through partnerships with BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, Reaching Home, and UBCM to support the operations of a wellness centre through to December 31, 2023, and the Fire Chief has inspected the building and concluded that there are no immediate life safety concerns;

Be it resolved that Council make a policy decision not to enforce the Zoning Bylaw or BC Building Code for this specific use at 45951 Tretheway Avenue until December 31, 2023.

Substantiation:

The Wellness Centre fulfills a top priority of the Chilliwack Community Safety Plan, providing a safe and welcoming, one stop centre for people to access services, rest and start making life changes.