



URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

The Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee is a civic agency appointed by Vancouver City Council to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for urban Indigenous peoples to fully participate in City services and civic life. The following represents the views of the members of the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee. The Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee is not expressing views on behalf of the City of Vancouver.

May 19, 2022

Mayor and Council

City of Vancouver

453 West 12th Avenue

Vancouver, ᑭᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ (Musqueam), ᑭᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ (Squamish) & ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ (Tsleil Waututh), B.C.

V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council:

RE: Keeping Our Sisters Safe

At its meeting on January 24, 2022, the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee passed the following motion:

THAT the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee send a letter to Mayor and City Council regarding the prevalence and incidence of Human Trafficking, assault, and exploitation of Indigenous and BIPOC peoples in the City of Vancouver.

At its meeting on May 10, 2022, the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee agreed via consensus to the following proposal:

THAT the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee update the previously approved letter to Mayor and City Council to reflect our concerns around the investigation of the death of Chelsea Poorman.

The Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee (UIPAC) stands in solidarity, sadness, and anger with the family of Chelsea Poorman and requests further inquest into the investigation conducted by the Vancouver Police Department.

The tragedy and trauma surrounding Chelsea's disappearance and subsequent investigative inconsistencies by the Vancouver Police Department are symptomatic of continuing injustice, violence, and systematic prejudice against Indigenous women, girls, and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community in Vancouver and across Turtle Island.

In 2014, City Council declared Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation and released an accompanying City of Reconciliation framework. Since its inception, the UIPAC has provided a platform to bring together municipal government and urban Indigenous community members, who serve upon the Committee as unpaid volunteers, in the spirit of reconciliation.

As grieving members of the urban Indigenous community, we are calling on the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department to recognize their responsibilities as central authorities in Vancouver, the City of Reconciliation, for the safety of our sisters and our children.

The UIPAC submits the following **concerns** and **recommendations** to Mayor and Council for review, kindly **requesting response before the next UIPAC working session on June 6, 2022:**

Concern: There appear to be significant procedural inconsistencies in the handling of Chelsea Poorman's case by the Vancouver Police Department.

Recommendations

1. UIPAC reiterates the request from the family of Chelsea Poorman for rigorous investigation by the VPD into her traumatic disappearance and unexplained death, which was deemed '[not suspicious](#)'.
2. UIPAC recommends the VPD issue an apology to the family of Chelsea Poorman
3. UIPAC is seeking clarity on the process of disclosing/withholding information from family and VPD communication protocol with families of suspected/missing/deceased persons
4. UIPAC recommends a review of current VPD policies and procedures that are discriminatory and culturally unsafe for survivors and family members, specifically in relation to [MMIWG2S](#)
5. UIPAC recommends the VPD and City of Vancouver work with the Committee and family of Chelsea Poorman in supporting a ceremony / feast in her honour
 - a. UIPAC recommends that the Mayor and Council attend the ceremony and release a statement to staff to raise awareness that Chelsea Poorman was missing and is now found and there is an ongoing investigation
 - b. UIPAC recommends the City of Vancouver provide space for the ceremony to be held
 - c. UIPAC recommends that the City Leadership Team take Red Dress Training to raise awareness and knowledge around MMIWG2S
 - d. UIPAC recommends funds be put aside for blankets to be purchased to be provided to the families

Concern: Serious concerns for the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ passengers while travelling in ride-shares, taxis, and public transit across Vancouver.

- Several incidents involving youth – one where VPD was made aware, yet were unable to do anything because no touching was involved, which has led to distrust in the community
- This issue is directly related to MMIWG2S and the Calls for Justice and Red Women Rising recommendations
- These incidents are disproportionately affecting Indigenous youth and 2SLGBTQIA+
- This is also an issue related to human trafficking and the exchange of goods and services for sex, where young people are being taken advantage of
- Are there policies or safety precautions in place for transporting minors under the influence?

Recommendations

1. UIPAC recommends the development of Public Safety Plan designations in public buildings for youth fleeing danger (libraries, recreation centres, health care centres, other buildings run by the City)
2. UIPAC recommends creating policy for increasing the safety of (BIPOC) youth travelling in ride-share, taxi, and public transportation (VPD, Streets and Transportation, Passenger Transportation Board, Translink, Taxi Licensing Program)
3. UIPAC recommends the creation of a campaign and partnership towards increasing public safety for (BIPOC) youth, specifically in relation to MMIWG2S, and human trafficking
4. UIPAC recommends strengthening collaboration and communication between the City of Vancouver, VPD, and the Committee; creating solutions and a safer city for Indigenous peoples, specifically women and youth.

Lastly, on May 12, 2022, a member of the UIPAC submitted a formal complaint against two VPD officers for aggressive and unprofessional behaviour, an incident which left the Committee member traumatized.

In honour of Chelsea Poorman and in light of recent events, the Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee will be conducting a collaborative review and assessment with the City of Vancouver's MMIWG2S Planner and Social Policy Team of the Vancouver Police Department's identified responsibilities outlined in the Calls to Justice, specifically, a

“Review of all [VPD] policies, practices, and procedures to ensure service delivery that is culturally appropriate and reflects no bias or racism toward Indigenous Peoples, including victims and survivors of violence.”

This review and assessment will remain a standing agenda item and priority for the UIPAC.

Following proper procedure, UIPAC suspended Procedure By-law rule of order 15.13 for the duration of the May 10, 2022 meeting, thereby initiating consensus-based alternative procedures that allow for the adoption of the aforementioned recommendations to Mayor and Council.

Sincerely,

Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee

Copies to: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Teresa Jong, Executive Assistant to the City Manager
Shabna Ali, Senior Social Planner, UIPAC Staff Liaison
Rachel Wuttunee, Social Planner, UIPAC Staff Liaison
Insp. Terry Yung, UIPAC VPD Liaison
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Tina Penney, Director, Legislative Operations
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies