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To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

CC: "[City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL](#)"

Date: 6/20/2018 10:32:25 AM

Subject: Regent Hotel - MAH news release

Attachments: 2018MAH0076-001246.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Further to my message earlier this morning regarding the closure of the Regent Hotel, please find attached for information the news release just issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Best,
Paul

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2018MAH0076-001246
June 20, 2018

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
City of Vancouver

Province provides better housing as city closes Regent Hotel

VANCOUVER – The Government of British Columbia is working with the City of Vancouver to move people living at the Regent Hotel into safer, more secure accommodations.

“Everyone deserves a healthy place to call home,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “Getting those most in need into safe, supported homes is just one of the ways we’re tackling the housing crisis, and making life better for all British Columbians.”

The City of Vancouver's chief building official has determined that, due to decades of under-investment and mismanagement by the building owners, the structural and life-safety deficiencies at the Regent Hotel, 160 E Hastings St., constitute an unsafe condition.

An order was issued on Wednesday, June 20, 2018, directing that occupancy of the Regent cease, as of June 28, 2018. This action is based on city-commissioned third-party engineering assessments of the building.

Given the urgent need for alternative and affordable housing for Regent residents, the provincial government has stepped in with funding through the Building BC: Supportive Housing Fund. The Province has purchased two buildings on Main Street, called the Jubilee Rooms, with space for nearly 80 of the Regent residents.

The Jubilee Rooms were purchased for \$12.5 million. A recent market appraisal valued the property at \$13.25 million.

While general security and cleanliness of the Regent has improved since non-profit housing operator, Atira Women’s Resource Society, took over management of the building, the closure follows years of health and safety violations that were not addressed by the owners. With the support of Atira and other service providers, including RainCity Housing, approximately 50 Regent tenants already have moved to other locations in the past several weeks.

The city has issued numerous orders to the owners to correct deficiencies and, to date, has referred more than 400 bylaw violations for prosecution. Those charges are making their way through the courts. In addition, the city has attempted to work with the owners to hire professionals to work on the structural and safety issues with the building. Work was started, but has not been completed.

“After many years of deplorable negligence by the owners of the Regent Hotel, the city and Province must intervene for the safety and well-being of tenants,” said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson. “The city’s frequent safety inspections at the Regent resulted in over 1,000 outstanding bylaw violations, of which 445 were referred to prosecution. In the coming days and weeks, city staff will work closely with BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, Atira and

RainCity to support people moving out of the Regent and into their new, safe homes at the Jubilee Rooms.”

RainCity Housing will manage the Jubilee Rooms where tenants will live in renovated rooms, have working washrooms, a meal program and 24/7 support services.

The safety and well-being of the Regent tenants, and ensuring all tenants have the housing they need, is the top priority. While it is the owners' legal obligation to support tenants with relocation and compensation under the Residential Tenancy Act, the city, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, and other community partners will provide supplemental support to help tenants move to better housing, and are working to ensure they receive compensation.

Robinson and Robertson will be available to media at 235 Main St. at 12:30 p.m. today.

Quotes:

Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction –

“People can’t escape poverty without a safe place to live. Providing healthy, supportive homes to people in need is a key part of the work we’re doing to give people the opportunity to build a better life for themselves.”

Melanie Mark, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant –

“It’s a shame that the situation with the Regent hotel has come to this. My constituents have been fighting an uphill battle for safe and affordable housing for too long. We know that without stable housing, people’s quality of life suffers. I’m glad to see that our government is working with the city to take action, and provide the safe and supportive housing the Regent tenants deserve.”

Amelia Ridgway, associate director, RainCity Housing –

“We look forward to offering support services, meals and a healthier environment to people who have been precariously housed in unsafe conditions, and connecting them with additional services. RainCity has provided housing in this community for over 30 years, and we have a deep connection with the vibrant and diverse people who call it home.”

Quick Facts:

- The Jubilee Rooms are located at 233/235 and 237/239 Main St. in Vancouver.
- Units will be rented at shelter rates, a maximum of \$375 per month.
- The new Building BC: Supportive Housing Fund will provide 2,500 new homes with 24/7 support services throughout the province, including the new housing at the Jubilee Rooms.
- The B.C. government is supporting the City of Vancouver’s response to homelessness through \$66 million in funding for 600 units of modular housing from the Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program.
- The Province will be working with local governments and community partners to develop a homelessness action plan for B.C.
- The City of Vancouver is taking actions to deliver more permanent social and supportive housing, including:

- Working toward approving a target of 12,000 new units of permanent social and supportive housing over the next 10 years, as part of its Housing Vancouver strategy.
- Continuing to approve and open new affordable homes to respond to the housing crisis and homelessness.
- In 2017, approximately 200 permanent social and supportive homes opened across Vancouver. In 2018, so far, more than 280 permanent social and supportive housing units have opened. The city expects nearly 620 more permanent social and supportive housing units to open.

Learn More:

Read Homes for B.C., government's 30-point plan to address housing affordability for British Columbians:

bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018_Homes_For_BC.pdf

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