

File No.: 04-1000-20-2019-598

October 24, 2019

s.22(1)

Dear s.22(1)

Re: **Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act")**

I am responding to your request of September 26, 2019 for:

All letters from the public addressed to Mayor Kennedy Stewart regarding the Oppenheimer Park homeless camp, from September 9, 2019 to September 25, 2019.

All responsive records are attached. Some information in the records has been severed, (blacked out), under s.22(1) of the Act. You can read or download this section here: http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00.

Under section 52 of the Act you may ask the Information & Privacy Commissioner to review any matter related to the City's response to your request. The Act allows you 30 business days from the date you receive this notice to request a review by writing to: Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner, info@oipc.bc.ca or by phoning 250-387-5629.

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with: 1) the request number assigned to your request (#04-1000-20-2019-598); 2) a copy of this letter; 3) a copy of your original request for information sent to the City of Vancouver; and 4) detailed reasons or grounds on which you are seeking the review.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Office at foi@vancouver.ca if you have any questions.

Yours truly,



Barbara J. Van Fraassen, BA
Director, Access to Information & Privacy

Barbara.vanfraassen@vancouver.ca
453 W. 12th Avenue Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4

*If you have any questions, please email us at foi@vancouver.ca and we will respond to you as soon as possible. Or you can call the FOI Case Manager at 604.871.6584.

Encl.

:kt

From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Bond, Abigail" <Abigail.Bond@vancouver.ca>
"Bligh, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Bligh@vancouver.ca>
"Carr, Adriane" <Adriane.Carr@vancouver.ca>
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"Dumont, Camil" <Camil.Dumont@vancouver.ca>
"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/11/2019 7:04:26 PM

Subject: Concern about Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1) and I am a resident of Vancouver, a recent graduate of UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səłilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

I am outraged that the Mayor of Vancouver is continuing to pursue jurisdiction over Oppenheimer Park and attempting to displace people from their tents without their consent or consultation, nor a legitimate and humane alternative. Kennedy Stewart has recently made deeply disturbing comments on Oppenheimer Park. On September 3rd, 2019 Stewart said, "We have to look at how are we going to return the park to normal operations with a whole range of options." He added that the people of Oppenheimer Park need a "nudge" to be displaced. I find these comments abhorrent and classist, as well as completely absurd.

The mayor has clearly indicated an interest in pursuing an injunction if he were to gain jurisdiction. For the sake of the people of Oppenheimer Park, we must not let this happen. In pursuing an injunction, the City would fail to uphold its obligation to work to improve peoples' living conditions, as stated in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. This failure to support the people of Oppenheimer Park is an act of dispossession that cannot be tolerated and represents an unacceptable perpetuation of structural violence against communities that already face additional barriers.

Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of

people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's supposed commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of an ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

The UBC Social Justice Centre strongly supports Oppenheimer Park advocates in their demands. We call on the City of Vancouver, provincial and federal governments and the Park Board to:

- Reject any request for the transfer of jurisdiction from the Park Board to the City of Vancouver.
- Stop fencing the park off, and ensure VCH funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, storage facilities, 24-hour sanitation.
- End police intervention in Oppenheimer Park. Ask city officials from the VPD, engineering and fire to attend weekly meetings.
- Immediately develop new units of social housing for the park's residents and homeless people across Vancouver, but not in the park.
- Amend Section 11 of the Parks Control By-Law to remove any reference of "tent" or "shelter".
- Convene meetings of elected federal, provincial, city and park board members with people who are homeless and the people in Oppenheimer Park.
- Install intentional encampments within the next few days at no location other than Oppenheimer Park while the City considers the park's residents' demands.
- Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provision of stable housing.

The UBC Social Justice Centre stands in solidarity with people in Oppenheimer Park and is demanding that the City show a basic respect for the rights and humanity of people living in Oppenheimer Park.

Sincerely,

s.22(1)

From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Bond, Abigail" <Abigail.Bond@vancouver.ca>
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"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/11/2019 3:20:19 PM

Subject: Displacement at Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is Anna Doebeli, I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səlilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

I am outraged to learn that the Mayor of Vancouver is continuing to pursue jurisdiction over Oppenheimer Park and attempting to displace people from their tents without their consent or consultation. These tents are often much safer than the SROs and shelters proposed as a replacement, where bedbugs, rats, cockroaches, black mould, and other safety hazards are rampant.

Kennedy Stewart has recently made deeply disturbing comments on Oppenheimer Park. On September 3rd, 2019 Stewart said, "We have to look at how are we going to return the park to normal operations with a whole range of options." He added that the people of Oppenheimer Park need a "nudge" to be displaced. I find these comments classist and disappointing coming from the mayor of a city with over 2200 homeless people. The mayor has clearly indicated an interest in pursuing an injunction if he were to gain jurisdiction.

In pursuing an injunction, the City would fail to uphold its obligation to work to improve peoples' living conditions, as stated in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. This failure to support the people of Oppenheimer Park is an act of dispossession that cannot be tolerated and represents an unacceptable perpetuation of structural violence against communities that already face

additional barriers.

Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's apparent commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of an ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

The UBC Social Justice Centre strongly supports Oppenheimer Park advocates in their demands. We call on the City of Vancouver, provincial and federal governments and the Park Board to:

- Reject any request for the transfer of jurisdiction from the Park Board to the City of Vancouver.
- Stop fencing the park off, and ensure there are provide VCH funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, storage facilities
- End police intervention in Oppenheimer Park. Ask city officials from the VPD, engineering and fire to attend weekly
- Immediately develop new units of social housing for the parks' residents and homeless people across Vancouver, but
- Amend Section 11 of the Parks Control By-Law to remove any reference of "tent" or "shelter".
- Convene meetings of elected federal, provincial, city and park board members with people who are homeless and the
- Install intentional encampments within the next few days at no location other than Oppenheimer Park while the City
- Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provision of stable

The UBC Social Justice Centre stands in solidarity with people in Oppenheimer Park and is demanding that the City show a basic respect of the rights and humanity of people living in Oppenheimer Park. If you 'nudge,' we nudge back.

Please keep me updated on this issue.

Sincerely,

Anna Doebeli
President, UBC Social Justice Centre
Unceded Coast Salish Territories

From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
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"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/11/2019 5:25:45 PM

Subject: Displacements in Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1) I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səlilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

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In pursuing an injunction, the City would fail to uphold its obligation to work to improve peoples' living conditions, as stated in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. This failure to support the people of Oppenheimer Park is an act of dispossession that cannot be

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Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's apparent commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of an ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

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"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

CC: socialjusticecentre.ubc@gmail.com

Date: 9/20/2019 5:45:52 PM

Subject: Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1), I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səłilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

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- Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provision of stable housing.

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Unceded Coast Salish Territories

From: s.22(1)

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"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/20/2019 5:37:34 PM

Subject: Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1) I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səłilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

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"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/20/2019 5:36:20 PM

Subject: Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is [Your Name], I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səłilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

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"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/20/2019 6:28:27 PM

Subject: Oppenheimer Park

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is Henry Guinn (he/him), I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC, and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park.

I am outraged to learn that the Mayor of Vancouver is continuing to pursue jurisdiction over Oppenheimer Park and attempting to displace people from their tents without their consent or consultation. These tents are often much safer than the SROs and shelters proposed as a replacement, where bedbugs, rats, cockroaches, black mold, and other safety hazards are rampant.

Kennedy Stewart has recently made deeply disturbing comments on Oppenheimer Park. On September 3rd, 2019 Stewart said, "We have to look at how are we going to return the park to normal operations with a whole range of options." He added that the people of Oppenheimer Park need a "nudge" to be displaced. I find these comments abhorrent, classist, and disappointing coming from the mayor of a city with over 2200 homeless people. The mayor has clearly indicated an interest in pursuing an injunction if he were to gain jurisdiction. For the sake of the people of Oppenheimer Park, we must not let this happen.

In pursuing an injunction, the City would fail to uphold its obligation to work to improve peoples' living conditions, as stated in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. This failure to support the people of Oppenheimer Park is an act of dispossession that cannot be tolerated and represents an unacceptable perpetuation of structural violence

against communities that already face additional barriers.

Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's apparent commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of the ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

The UBC Social Justice Centre strongly supports Oppenheimer Park advocates in their demands. We call on the City of Vancouver, provincial and federal governments and the Park Board to:

- Reject any request for the transfer of jurisdiction from the Park Board to the City of Vancouver.
- Stop fencing the park off, and ensure VCH funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, storage facilities, 24-
- End police intervention in Oppenheimer Park. Ask city officials from the VPD, engineering and fire to atte
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- Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provisi

The UBC Social Justice Centre stands in solidarity with people in Oppenheimer Park and is demanding that the City show a basic respect for the rights and humanity of people living in Oppenheimer Park. If you 'nudge,' we nudge back.

Please keep me updated on this issue.

Sincerely,

s.22(1)

s.22(1)

From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Bond, Abigail" <Abigail.Bond@vancouver.ca>
"Bligh, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Bligh@vancouver.ca>
"Carr, Adriane" <Adriane.Carr@vancouver.ca>
"De Genova, Melissa" <Melissa.DeGenova@vancouver.ca>
"Fry, Pete" <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>
"Wiebe, Michael" <Michael.Wiebe@vancouver.ca>
"Dominated, Lisa" <Lisa.Dominated@vancouver.ca>
"Hardwick, Colleen" <Colleen.Hardwick@vancouver.ca>
"Kirby-Yung, Sarah" <Sarah.Kirby-Yung@vancouver.ca>
"Swanson, Jean" <Jean.Swanson@vancouver.ca>
"Barker, Tricia" <Tricia.Barker@vancouver.ca>
"Coupar, John" <John.Coupar@vancouver.ca>
"Demers, Dave" <Dave.Demers@vancouver.ca>
"Irwin, John" <John.Irwin@vancouver.ca>
"Dumont, Camil" <Camil.Dumont@vancouver.ca>
"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/20/2019 6:03:46 PM

Subject: Oppenheimer Park

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My name is s.22(1) I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səŋilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

I am outraged to learn that the Mayor of Vancouver is continuing to pursue jurisdiction over Oppenheimer Park and attempting to displace people from their tents without their consent or consultation. These tents are often much safer than the SROs and shelters proposed as a replacement, where bedbugs, rats, cockroaches, black mould, and other safety hazards are rampant.

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additional barriers.

Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's apparent commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of an ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

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- Reject any request for the transfer of jurisdiction from the Park Board to the City of Vancouver.
- Stop fencing the park off, and ensure VCH funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, storage facilities, 24-hour sanitation.
- End police intervention in Oppenheimer Park. Ask city officials from the VPD, engineering and fire to attend weekly meetings.
- Immediately develop new units of social housing for the parks' residents and homeless people across Vancouver, but not in the park.
- Amend Section 11 of the Parks Control By-Law to remove any reference of "tent" or "shelter".
- Convene meetings of elected federal, provincial, city and park board members with people who are homeless and the people in the park.
- Install intentional encampments within the next few days at no location other than Oppenheimer Park while the City considers the park's future.
- Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provision of stable housing.

The UBC Social Justice Centre stands in solidarity with people in Oppenheimer Park and is demanding that the City show basic respect for the rights and humanity of people living in Oppenheimer Park. If you 'nudge,' we nudge back.

Please keep me updated on this issue.

Sincerely,

s.22(1)



From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Bond, Abigail" <Abigail.Bond@vancouver.ca>
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"Dumont, Camil" <Camil.Dumont@vancouver.ca>
"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/11/2019 7:00:31 PM

Subject: Please do not displace homeless people dwelling in Oppenheimer Park!

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1) I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səŋilwətaʔ /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

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Please keep me updated on this issue.

Sincerely,

s.22(1)



From: "Fiona York" <fiona@carnegieaction.org>

To: "Stewart, Kennedy"

Date: 9/21/2019 7:07:45 AM

Subject: Press release: "We're a family" – Residents and supporters respond to Vancouver Police Department statement about Oppenheimer Park

Attachments: "We're a family" – Residents and supporters respond to Vancouver Police Department statement about Oppenheimer Park.pdf

"We're a family" – Residents and supporters respond to Vancouver Police Department statement about Oppenheimer Park

Unceded territory, September 20, 2019 –Residents, Indigenous community members, grandmothers and supporters of Oppenheimer Park continue to state that they feel safer in community in the park than in isolated back alleys and isolated doorways, and to call on the Vancouver mayor, councilors and senior members of the Vancouver Police Department to have a conversation about what creates safety.

The VPD narrative is the latest effort to evict poor people from Oppenheimer Park without addressing the underlying issue of the collective failure of all levels of governments to ensure accessible, affordable housing, to acknowledge the homelessness crisis and housing emergency in the city of Vancouver and to allow park residents to have a say in decision-making about their own safety.

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing, Leilani Farha, "In order for the City's actions to be compliant with human rights, the residents of Oppenheimer Park need to be meaningfully consulted and included in the development of any plans related to their living situations."

"If they're truly concerned about resident safety, why are they not sending a more senior member to weekly safety meetings – instead of only sending a Staff Sergeant?" asks tent city liaison Chrissy Brett. "If I, as an Indigenous grandmother, can feel safe staying in the park, then why don't they? This is just a bully mentality because the the VPD feel they have no control – they want an injunction because they are not in charge."

The City of Vancouver has sought a jurisdictional takeover of Oppenheimer Park, saying that residents needed a "nudge" to leave and that the City cannot offer resources without taking jurisdictional control from the Park Board. But the City clearly has the power to advocate for resources, supports, and life-saving health and safety measures such as funding for the Overdose Prevention Site in the park and funding for housing from upper levels of government even without jurisdictional authority.

"When I first came here, I didn't have any friends or family. How they say Oppenheimer is the most violent - that's bullshit. All this drama - they're caging us out of Native land. They're treating us like we're not even human beings. Oppenheimer's not a bad park. When kids are in there, we make sure it's safe. We give food, water, clothes. We always stick together. We're a family," says Chris, park resident.

According to an August 2019 statement by Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, "A disproportionately high number of the vulnerable park residents facing the loss of a safe and stable living situation are Indigenous. Any move to forcefully evict them is callous and insensitive to the mental health, addictions, and poverty that they are battling as a result of an ongoing colonial legacy of systemic discrimination and oppression."

"Oh my God, really?" says Nisga'a grandmother Erica Grant about the VPD safety concerns. "Everybody looks after each other here. I see no safety issues. People are living here. This is

their home.”

“There is a proverb in this community – Nothing about us, without us,” says Indigenous activist Flora Munroe. “We’re never going to go away. We have a heart here that just beats with the earth. We will never go away. We will rise up.”

The VPD rely heavily on 911 calls and alleged crimes (they provide no conviction data) in claiming Oppenheimer tent city is causing an increase in “street disorder”. Similar “evidence” has been cited with regard to other tent cities in municipal bids to evict residents. For example, Saanich PD made comparable claims regarding Camp Namegans on Vancouver Island in 2018 – in response, Jeffrey Shantz, Professor of Criminology, provided an expert opinion to the court which explained:

“There is no research-based evidence that tent cities create environments where residents are more likely to commit crime than if they were sheltering outside alone or in multiple smaller groups. It is my opinion that tent cities may decrease crime by providing environments where people can get more of their material and psychological needs met than if they are sheltering in isolation.”

Shantz also explained that the number of phone calls to an area does not equate to the number of crimes. “There is no evidence-based research to support the conclusion that an increase in calls for service is necessarily the result of a respective increase in crime... and may in fact be the result of increased police activity or media amplification.”

In addition, a [recent study](#) by the BC Centre on Substance Use and the University of British Columbia showed that policing practices in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside are creating barriers for people wanting to access overdose prevention sites. The VPD claims they support the “four pillars” approach to substance use, but all they have discussed is enforcement. Where is their commitment to prevention, treatment and harm reduction? How will evicting Oppenheimer serve these other needs?

The 24-hour, fully volunteer-run, Vancouver Coastal health-sanctioned Overdose Prevention Site at Oppenheimer Park serves over 100 community members every day and is the only 24-hour OPS in the neighbourhood. The site provides triaging of health and safety as well as harm reduction for those staying at the park and is a beacon of light for others in the neighbourhood when other services are closed.

Residents and activists support the call from Vancouver Park Board for a Joint Task Force, which would be the appropriate place for high level officials from VFD, VCH, BCH, VPD, the City, Parks, and Parks Board to come together and discuss comprehensive safety.

Residents and activists also continue to amplify the call for immediate supports in the park including peer support, electricity and funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, community kitchen facilities, improved sanitation facilities, a warming tent and storage. In the longer term, residents and activists are calling on all three levels of government to:

- Provide new housing options for Oppenheimer park residents, and/or buy or lease one or more hotels while ensuring appropriate housing for women and for indigenous women and children, until proper housing can be built.
- Secure land and government funding for modular homes, social and co-op housing to drastically reduce homelessness in Vancouver

Media Contacts

Chrissy Brett
Liaison at Oppenheimer Tent City
1-250-415-2348

Fiona York, Coordinator and Administrator
Carnegie Community Action Project
604-251-6164

Erica Grant
Peer Researcher, CCAP, Right To Remain
78-919-4612

Flora Munroe
Vandu, Our Homes Can't Wait
236-886-1125

Media ethics: please remember that for many people, a tent is a home, and be respectful when approaching people living in the park.

-30-

Backgrounder

Long considered a safe place and social justice zone, Oppenheimer Park has a long history for Indigenous people. "From time immemorial, this area was a gathering place for Aboriginal people, a place to hunt and gather and meet others. First Nations people who felt unwelcome in Stanley Park after its founding in 1887 made this park "their home" (Heart of the City Festival). It is the only park designated by the Parks Board as a site for free speech in that decade of marches, sit-ins, and mass demonstrations.

There are well over 2223 homeless people in the City of Vancouver. Most have no access to daytime shelter, and at least 600 people have zero overnight shelter options. Tent cities like Oppenheimer provide safety in community. At Oppenheimer Park, residents can access a VCH-sanctioned, peer-run Overdose Prevention Site, basic sanitation services, some food security and peer support. Tent cities are often considered "harm reduction zones" in the midst of housing crises, as they reduce exposure to external violence and the elements and provide basic necessities and a community of peers.

Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

As of September 19, there were 117 tents in the park.

--

Fiona York

CCAP Coordinator and Administrator

fiona@carnegieaction.org | 604-665-2105 | Carnegie Community Centre, 401 Main Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 2T7 Unceded Coast Salish Territories

The Carnegie Community Action Project is a project of the board of the *Carnegie Community Centre Association*. CCAP works mostly on housing, income, and land use issues in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver so that the area can remain a low income friendly community.

“We’re a family” – Residents and supporters respond to Vancouver Police Department statement about Oppenheimer Park

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From: s.22(1)

To: "Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Carr, Adriane" <Adriane.Carr@vancouver.ca>
"Wiebe, Michael" <Michael.Wiebe@vancouver.ca>
"Stop Demovictions-BBY" <stopdemovictions-bby@googlegroups.com>
"john horgan mla" <john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>
ccampbell <ccampbell@burnabynow.com>

Date: 9/10/2019 4:53:25 PM

Subject: Re: help Oppenheimer public park vancouver bc canada stay in canada

Hello Everyone involved in Oppenheimer Park homeless people of all cultures,

It is sad to see the political rhetoric around an issue that has been going on and around our province and canada for at least 40 years or more.

As the perfect storm rages we know the end decision result without resolution will to have it slip quietly into foreign ownership and that ends that. happened in burnaby bc and other communities!

As mentioned, One immediate solution is to create a committee including federal, provincial, municipal and F.N. reps, to agree on a permanent housing solution instead of adding traditional tent cities, to a housing crisis. This is a good size park so a portion can be left for public enjoyment. Just do it!!!

Look, we know there is many good solutions to this issue but when I see comments from other parts of the world countries communities that Canada has a poor track record for looking after seniors, working poor, homeless and vulnerable really makes me wonder why and what we are paying politicians hard earned taxpayer \$\$\$ in all levels of local micro government and macro governments???

Young people male and female get involved now and help shape your destiny for the good!!

The tyee independent journalism threads said we won't have any violent protests and that is good but we sure need an intelligence revolution among our leaders and followers to deal with our everyday problems that never seem to get resolved day after day, week after week, month after month and year after years.

Hope to see some good quality suggestions in a report from your committee that definitely leads to that park land being developed by and for Canadians and not foreign entities.

In solidarity for quality of better life in our Canadian communities for all and not just a few,

s.22(1) in Burnaby BC

From: s.22(1)

To: "mayor" <mayor@vancouver.ca>, "CLRCarr" <CLRCarr@vancouver.ca>, "CLRwiebe" <CLRwiebe@vancouver.ca>, "Stop Demovictions-BBY" <stopdemovictions-bby@googlegroups.com>, "john horgan mla" <john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca>, "stuart mackinnon" <stuart.mackinnon@vancouver.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 9:13:24 AM

Hello Everyone involved in Oppenheimer Park homeless people of all cultures,

it is sad to see the world media attention comments on a 1938 built public park contrasting to a homeless crisis in lower mainland bc Canada.

It may be time to build social housing on this site. it appears to be the answer and hear requests of those who need it most.

The social housing would be open to all cultures in Canada.

It is time to stop making world news for all the wrong reasons.

Politicians come to your senses and get off those fences and help your community(ies) to prosper in ways that we really need to sustain and remain a sovereign country.

If you can't lead, then step aside and get out of the way. please share with your colleagues okay and than you

In solidarity for quality of better life in our communities for all and not just a few,

s.22(1) in Burnaby BC

To: "Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
SDPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca
"PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>
"Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
"Zaenker, Anita" <Anita.Zaenker@vancouver.ca>
"Zak, MaryClare" <MaryClare.Zak@vancouver.ca>
"Postma, Tobin" <Tobin.Postma@vancouver.ca>
"Regan, Wes" <Wes.Regan@vancouver.ca>
"Palmer, Adam" <adam.palmer@vpd.ca>
"EELY, Steve" <steve.eely@vpd.ca>
"Muir, Suzanne" <suzanne.muir@vpd.ca>
"RADIUK, Rachelle" <Rachelle.Radiuk@vancouverpoliceboard.ca>
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peter.wong@vancouverpoliceboard.ca
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complaintresolution@bchousing.org
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"Coupar, John" <John.Coupar@vancouver.ca>
"Demers, Dave" <Dave.Demers@vancouver.ca>
"Dumont, Camil" <Camil.Dumont@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>
"Irwin, John" <John.Irwin@vancouver.ca>
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"Bligh, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Bligh@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Carr, Adriane" <Adriane.Carr@vancouver.ca>
"De Genova, Melissa" <Melissa.DeGenova@vancouver.ca>
"Dominated, Lisa" <Lisa.Dominated@vancouver.ca>
"Fry, Pete" <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>
"Hardwick, Colleen" <Colleen.Hardwick@vancouver.ca>

"Kirby-Yung, Sarah" <Sarah.Kirby-Yung@vancouver.ca>

"Swanson, Jean" <Jean.Swanson@vancouver.ca>

"Wiebe, Michael" <Michael.Wiebe@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/10/2019 2:23:03 PM

Subject: To Whom it May Concern,

Attachments: Letter re Oppenheimer.pdf

Dear Mayor Kennedy Stewart,

I am writing to you today regarding the housing crisis in Vancouver that has led to countless people losing their homes and finding themselves unable to find an adequate replacement. If you had to choose between living in a run down building that had no freedom, significant health risks such as black mould, and nonpotable water; or setting up a tent in the gentle BC weather, which would you choose? If the city doesn't want people living in tents, there should be an effort to upgrade all SROs to livable standards, and to provide more safe housing that is affordable to those on income assistance.

Oppenheimer park has been a gathering space in the downtown eastside (DTES) since the founding of Stanley Park in 1887. A vibrant, diverse and supportive community, it is the site of the city's only 24-hour volunteer-run overdose prevention (OP) tent. The number of overdose death preventions that occur in the OPs tent is a testament to the vital role the park and its current residents play in the health and security of the DTES. Why are members of the DTES community being criminalized when they're just struggling to exist in peace? There is no excuse for the criminalization of poverty, especially on unceded land. We have a duty to ensure that the systems and policies in place are not victimizing those already marginalized.

There is no need to take over the park and "nudge" its residents. I thank the Vancouver Parks Board for its acknowledgment that there is no need for a legal injunction to forcefully remove campers. The issue can easily be solved by opening an abandoned building or taking over a hotel and turning it into more SRO housing like the Biltmore in 2014. Kicking people out of the park will only take away a safe space and make life more difficult for the park's residents and the broader DTES community. Some might think a shelter bed is better than a tent, but as someone with lived experience of homelessness I can personally attest to the lack of consistency in security and unsafe living conditions that were provided. Shelter beds and unsafe or restrictive SROs are not adequate housing solutions for the park's current residents.

Once someone has a sense of permanency and belonging they are able to seek support for the other things in their life they may have previously been unable to, such as trauma or mental health. I must also ask that the field house at Oppenheimer be opened back up so that residents of the park are able to access the resources they need at this time. Closing the field house has only had negative impacts upon the community as a whole, and has deeply affected the Elders in the DTES.

Respectfully,

s.22(1)

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09/09/2019

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Respectfully,

s.22(1)

From: s.22(1)

To: "PB Commissioners" <PBCommissioners@vancouver.ca>
"Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
"Stewart, Kennedy" <Kennedy.Stewart@vancouver.ca>
"Bond, Abigail" <Abigail.Bond@vancouver.ca>
"Bligh, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Bligh@vancouver.ca>
"Carr, Adriane" <Adriane.Carr@vancouver.ca>
"De Genova, Melissa" <Melissa.DeGenova@vancouver.ca>
"Fry, Pete" <Pete.Fry@vancouver.ca>
"Wiebe, Michael" <Michael.Wiebe@vancouver.ca>
"Dominated, Lisa" <Lisa.Dominated@vancouver.ca>
"Hardwick, Colleen" <Colleen.Hardwick@vancouver.ca>
"Kirby-Yung, Sarah" <Sarah.Kirby-Yung@vancouver.ca>
"Swanson, Jean" <Jean.Swanson@vancouver.ca>
"Barker, Tricia" <Tricia.Barker@vancouver.ca>
"Coupar, John" <John.Coupar@vancouver.ca>
"Demers, Dave" <Dave.Demers@vancouver.ca>
"Irwin, John" <John.Irwin@vancouver.ca>
"Dumont, Camil" <Camil.Dumont@vancouver.ca>
"Giesbrecht, Gwen" <Gwen.Giesbrecht@vancouver.ca>
"Mackinnon, Stuart" <Stuart.Mackinnon@vancouver.ca>
CC: "Social Justice Centre UBC" <socialjusticecentre.ubc@gmail.com>

Date: 9/12/2019 9:35:51 PM

Subject: * Urgent * Oppenheimer Park Intervention

Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Council,

My name is s.22(1) I am a resident of Vancouver, a student at UBC and a member of the UBC Social Justice Centre. I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment about the ways that the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Fire Department are treating people living at Oppenheimer Park, on unceded səłilwətaʔt /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory.

I am outraged to learn that the Mayor of Vancouver is continuing to pursue jurisdiction over Oppenheimer Park and attempting to displace people from their tents without their consent or consultation. These tents are often much safer than the SROs and shelters proposed as a replacement, where bedbugs, rats, cockroaches, black mould, and other safety hazards are rampant.

Kennedy Stewart has recently made deeply disturbing comments on Oppenheimer Park. On September 3rd, 2019 Stewart said, "We have to look at how are we going to return the park to normal operations with a whole range of options." He added that the people of Oppenheimer Park need a "nudge" to be displaced. I find these comments abhorrent, classist, and disappointing coming from the mayor of a city with over 2200 homeless people. The mayor has clearly indicated an interest in pursuing an injunction if he were to gain jurisdiction. For the sake of the people of Oppenheimer Park, we must not let this happen.

In pursuing an injunction, the City would fail to uphold its obligation to work to improve peoples' living conditions, as stated in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and reiterated by the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. This failure to support the people of Oppenheimer Park is an act of dispossession that cannot be tolerated and represents an unacceptable perpetuation of structural violence against communities that already face additional barriers.

Further, following the words of Grand Chief Steward Phillip, along with many others, I understand the displacement of people in Oppenheimer Park as a violation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and as an act of ongoing settler colonialism that perpetuates the violent dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people, on Indigenous territories, without proper consent or consultation. Seeking an injunction against the people in Oppenheimer Park stands in opposition to Vancouver's apparent commitment to reconciliation, and is symptomatic of an ongoing denial of the humanity of people living in the Downtown Eastside.

The UBC Social Justice Centre strongly supports Oppenheimer Park advocates in their demands. We call on the City of Vancouver, provincial and federal governments and the Park Board to:

- ☐ Reject any request for the transfer of jurisdiction from the Park Board to the City of Vancouver.
- ☐ Stop fencing the park off, and ensure VCH funding for the Overdose Prevention Site, storage facilities, 24-hour sanitation facilities with running water, and a warming tent.
- ☐ End police intervention in Oppenheimer Park. Ask city officials from the VPD, engineering and fire to attend weekly resident-led safety meetings with Oppenheimer Park residents.
- ☐ Immediately develop new units of social housing for the parks' residents and homeless people across Vancouver, buy or lease one or more motels until proper housing can be built, and provide appropriate housing for women and for Indigenous women and children.
- ☐ Amend Section 11 of the Parks Control By-Law to remove any reference of "tent" or "shelter".
- ☐ Convene meetings of elected federal, provincial, city and park board members with people who are homeless and their representatives to make short and longer term plans to ensure that all people have a place to be safe and warm for the winter and to get proper housing as soon as possible.
- ☐ Install intentional encampments within the next few days at no location other than Oppenheimer Park while the City of Vancouver buys/leases motel(s) to offer emergency housing to the park's residence. Alternatively, to install intentional encampments on concrete within walking distance of Oppenheimer Park.
- ☐ Pledge to not seek an injunction at Oppenheimer Park, or displace the park's residents without the provision of stable, long-term housing.

The UBC Social Justice Centre stands in solidarity with people in Oppenheimer Park and is demanding that the City show a basic respect for the rights and humanity of people living in Oppenheimer Park. If you 'nudge,' we nudge back.

Please keep me updated on this issue.

Sincerely,

s.22(1)

