



August 29, 2019

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Stuart Mackinnon
Board Chair, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Oppenheimer Park Encampment Meetings – Board Update**

Dear Commissioners,

On Tuesday, August 27, 2019, I attended two meetings concerning the encampment at Oppenheimer Park. The first was with representatives of the Mayor's Office, and the second was with representatives of the Oppenheimer homeless camp. Both meetings were respectful, and each participant was given the opportunity to share their perspectives. I want to take this opportunity to share with you my main takeaways from those meetings.

From my meeting with the Mayor's office:

1. The encampment is expensive in terms of City and Park Board staff, police, and fire & rescue resources;
2. The Mayor's Office considers the encampment to be a danger to public safety;
3. There is no additional housing available except temporary shelters;
4. The Mayor's Office wants large encampments including Oppenheimer cleared, but as they have no permanent solution for housing, they understand the occupants will return to the streets.

From my meeting with representatives of the Oppenheimer homeless camp:

1. Residents of the encampment would like secure modular or other safe/clean housing without restrictions placed upon them; in the absence of this, they would like to remain in the park and:
 - be treated with dignity, honour, and respect by officials and persons in authority;
 - have access to electricity in the park;
 - have access to the kitchen facility in the park for a minimum of 3-4 hours per day;
 - meet with VPD, VFRS, CoV and PB to discuss ongoing issues they perceive as harassment;
 - receive a commitment that an injunction will not be sought by the Park Board.

At both meetings I made it clear that I was not speaking on behalf of the Board, and that any plans involving the Park Board would require Board approval. The General Manager, who accompanied me to the meeting with the Mayor's Office, is considering information from that meeting and will update the Board as applicable.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Mackinnon'.

Stuart Mackinnon
Chair - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Copy to: Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, PB Senior Leadership Team