



NEWS RELEASE

Council to Consider Update to Park's Bylaw

ABBOTSFORD, January 21, 2016 – On January 25, 2016 Abbotsford City Council will consider and deliberate on proposed changes to our Park's Bylaw as a result of the Supreme Court of British Columbia's October 2015 ruling, stated Mayor Henry Braun today.

On October 21, 2015, Supreme Court Justice, Christopher Hinkson issued a ruling that provides the ability for homeless persons to camp overnight in Abbotsford city parks between the hours of 7pm and 9am, if there are no shelter beds available in the community. The ruling was based on the BC Court of Appeal ruling that was applied to the City of Victoria in 2009 (*Adams BCCA*). At the time of the Court ruling, Abbotsford City Council committed to creating a made-in-Abbotsford response to the ruling that was in-line with the City's commitment to utilizing a Housing First approach toward homelessness in the community.

Part of that made-in-Abbotsford solution included the opening of a 40-bed Temporary Response Shelter located on Riverside Road on December 21, 2015. The Temporary Response Shelter has seen a very positive response since opening its doors with a ninety-three (93) per cent overall occupancy rate and forty-seven (47) individuals receiving case-management services. To date, nine (9) people have been found permanent housing and have been relocated from the shelter into permanent housing situations, which according to the Housing First approach is the first step in ending the cycle of homelessness.

Quotes from Mayor Henry Braun:

"City Council will consider the proposed updates to the City's Park's Bylaw at the next meeting of Council which is this coming Monday January 25," said Braun. "Once updates to the Park's Bylaw have been adopted, the City will be asking our local service providers to focus their efforts on assisting any remaining campers on Gladys Road in finding alternate accommodations in keeping with our commitment toward Housing First solutions."

"I would like to stress that this process is less about the City adhering to a strict timeline and more about ensuring that our service providers have the opportunity to work with these folks," said Braun. "Ensuring people have the opportunity to move towards housing holds true to our commitment to utilizing a Housing First approach in addressing homelessness in Abbotsford."

“I would like to thank all Abbotsford residents for your patience over the past two years as we have gone through this legal process,” said Braun. “The issue of homelessness is extremely complex and requires all levels of government to participate in generating solutions. I look forward to continuing to work alongside our local provincial and federal representatives in generating positive solutions for our community.”

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