



NEWS RELEASE

Council Announces Task Force on Homelessness

Abbotsford, March 20, 2014 – “Abbotsford City Council has struck a Task Force on Homelessness to address multiple issues related to homelessness in our community, announced Mayor, Bruce Banman today.

“Council created the Task Force on Homelessness to address the issues before our community from a holistic perspective,” said Banman. “We need to examine not only the conditions and responses to homelessness that exist in Abbotsford today, but address the steps we need to take to meet the requirements in our community going forward.”

The Task Force will operate as a Committee of Council and will be co-chaired by long-time Abbotsford City Councillors Patricia Ross and John Smith.

“This is an immediate undertaking to identify short, medium and long-term strategies to address homelessness issues in Abbotsford,” said Banman. “The Task Force has been charged with designing and initiating a comprehensive community-wide homelessness response plan working in full consultation with all community partners including BC Housing, the Fraser Health Authority, the service community and the business community.”

Members of the Task Force also include representation from MCC, the Food Bank, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Abbotsford Christian Leaders Network and the Abbotsford Police Department.

“The Task Force will be working very closely with all levels in the community and conducting multiple engagement activities to ensure they capture all perspectives and all voices,” said Banman. “They will be the forum through which the community discusses the issue of homelessness in the City of Abbotsford.”

The first meeting of the Task Force will take place early April 2014. Members of Council’s Task Force on Homelessness are named in the attached Backgrounder.

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BACKGROUNDER

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BACKGROUND

Abbotsford City Council Task Force on Homelessness

Task Force Members:

Jim Burkinshaw

Jim Burkinshaw is the volunteer Coordinator of the [Abbotsford Christian Leadership Network's](#) "City of Refuge Team", a group of ministry and church leaders in Abbotsford whose goal is to help churches expand and coordinate their existing involvement in social justice concerns. Jim is a Chartered Professional Accountant, MBA and works full time in the agricultural industry. He also teaches part-time at Trinity Western University's School of Business.

Joyce McElhoes

Joyce McElhoes is the director & co-founder of Cyrus Centre Ministries in Abbotsford, Cyrus Centre is a inner city mission providing emergency shelter and resource centre for at-risk youth. Joyce has been married for 32 years to her loving husband Jordie; they have three children and 10 grandchildren and make Abbotsford their home. Joyce has worked with at-risk youth and homeless individuals for 25 years providing direct service, foster care, advocacy, staff training, program development & community awareness.

Joyce is a member of the Fraser Valley action Team and is a regular presenter regarding sexual exploitation and its affects.

Darin Froese

Darin is the Executive Director, Lower Mainland Non Profit with [BC Housing](#) and has worked in senior operational and program management positions before joining BC Housing 8 years ago. Darin holds a BBA from Simon Fraser University and has attended the Executive Program in Public Sector Leadership at Royal Roads University. He has been a member of numerous community task forces during his career.

Stan Kuperis

Stan Kuperis is the Director of Clinical Programs Mental Health and Substance Use with [Fraser Health](#), responsible for the areas of Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack, Agassiz and Hope. Stan has worked with Fraser Health in the area of MHSU for 14 years and has

previously been the Manager of MHSU in Chilliwack for 12 years. He has been involved with the Homelessness Strategy in Chilliwack resulting in the creation of the Chilliwack Health and Housing Contact Centre. As well he has been involved in developing outreach mental health and substance use services to folks who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

Dr. Lawrence Loh

Lawrence Loh is Medical Health Officer at [Fraser Health](#) Authority (FHA), overseeing a regional portfolio that includes mental health, substance use, and homelessness. He presently sits on the Burnaby Taskforce for the Homelessness and also represented FHA to the committee overseeing the 2014 Mission Homelessness Count. A graduate of the University of Western Ontario's medical school, he completed training at the University of Toronto, which included work at St. Michael's Hospital, Canada's largest inner-city hospital. He holds a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and was the recipient of the 2013 American Public Health Association Jay S. Drotman award, a national award recognizing the creative work of a promising young public health professional.

Karen Matty

Karen Matty is the President of Matsqui Developments Co. Ltd. She has served as a member of the Abbotsford Foundation, the Abbotsford Economic Development Board, the Abbotsford Airport Authority, the Abbotsford Police Board, Fraser Health Authority Board, the Affordable Housing Committee and Technical Advisory Committee. She received an Outstanding Business Award from the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce as well as the Paul Harris Award and the Order of Abbotsford from the City.

Dave Murray

Dave Murray is the Director of the [Abbotsford Food Bank](#) with Abbotsford Community Services. He also plays an important coordinator role in the Abbotsford Homeless Count and coordinates the Extreme Weather shelter program in Abbotsford.

Bob Rich

Chief Constable Bob Rich has been a police officer since 1980. He became the Chief Constable for the [Abbotsford Police Department](#) (APD) in July of 2008. Prior to joining the APD, Chief Rich was with the Vancouver Police Department where he served as the Deputy Chief of the Operations Division. Chief Rich serves on the Board of Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, the police agency responsible for suppressing gang violence and the Board of the Justice Institute of BC, and has previously served as a board member on the Covenant House Board of Directors. In 2013, he was invested as an Officer of the Order of Merit for Police Forces in Canada by the Governor General. Chief Rich holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of British Columbia.

Patricia Ross

Patricia Ross is currently serving her 7th term on [Abbotsford City Council](#). Patricia's philosophy toward government is to fully embrace the Sustainability principles. That is, to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts in all decision making. Patricia is a Fellow of Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) International and is the recipient of the 2009 "Woman of the Year" Award. Her current appointments include: Vice-Chair of the Fraser Valley Regional District; Abbotsford/Mission Water and Sewer Services Commission; Abbotsford Environmental Advisory Committee; and the Restorative Justice Board; Metro Vancouver Board.

John Smith

John Smith has served on [Abbotsford City Council](#) since 2005 and has been a resident of Abbotsford for nearly 38 years. He has previously served as an elected School Trustee (24 years); Director of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce (1995/6); Director, Fraser Valley Regional District Board and Vice Chair of the Fraser Valley Regional Hospital Board; and has served as Chair of the Abbotsford Social Development Advisory Committee (3 years) and on the City of Abbotsford's Affordable Housing Fund Advisory Committee, among other City committees.

Dr. Ron van Wyk

Ron is currently the Associate Executive Director at [Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia](#) (MCC BC). Since 2004 Ron has worked together with Dr. Anita van Wyk on homelessness and affordable housing in the FVRD resulting in various reports and good practice recommendations to respond to homelessness and the need for more affordable housing. Ron is a former Chair of the City of Abbotsford's Social Development Advisory Committee, and currently the Co-Chair of the City's Technical Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing. Ron holds an earned Doctorate in Sociology from University of Port Elizabeth (renamed the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) in South Africa where worked as a researcher and lecturer for 12 years. From 1994-1999 he served as Director-General (Deputy Minister) of Education, Culture and Sport in the provincial government of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Mike Welte

Mike is currently the President of the [Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce](#) and has been actively involved with the Chamber for more than 6 years. He has served as the past-chairperson of the Chamber's Agricultural Committee and has represented the Chamber on the City of Abbotsford's Agriculture Advisory Committee, Economic Development Commission and the Mayor's Task force on Economic Prosperity. Mike works as a Manager here in Abbotsford with Farm Credit Canada. Mike has served as Treasurer of Abbotsford-Matsqui Rotary Club and remains involved with many community events including the Abbotsford Airshow. Currently he serves as a committee member for the Abbotsford Community Foundation's Agriculture Grants Enhancement Fund. A UFV Graduate with a Bachelors of Business Administration; Mike was born, raised and educated in Abbotsford.

Task Force Coordinator:

Cherie Enns

Cherie Enns is a long-standing associate professor at the University of the Fraser Valley. She is also a social planning consultant and president of [Cherie Enns Consulting Inc.](#) with experience securing funding, creating MOUs, and researching best practices regarding social issues. Cherie is also a registered planner, Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners, and past Board member of Dodson House (Low barrier housing).

City of Abbotsford Staff Liaison:

Jake Rudolph

Jake Rudolph joined the [City of Abbotsford](#) as Deputy City Manager in October, 2013. Previously Jake served as the chief administrative officer for the City of Pitt Meadows for more than 10 years. In his 29 year career in local and regional government he has worked in four different provinces. He attained his MBA, Masters in Planning, and Executive Leadership Certificate from Harvard University. He currently serves as co-chair on the board for the Metro Vancouver Integrated Emergency Management Committee and in the past he was chair of the Metro Vancouver City Administrators Committee, president of Ridge Meadows Minor Hockey Association and director of Fredericton Chamber of Commerce and Knowledge Park Board.