



MOTION ON NOTICE

Submitted at the Regular Board meeting held on 2019-02-25

Oppenheimer Park Warming Shelter & Support Services

MOVER: Commissioner Irwin

WHEREAS:

1. There are currently 80-100 people camping in Oppenheimer Park in below freezing temperatures;
2. Most are living with makeshift shelters, with insufficient bedding, lack of proper nutrition and no formal source of heat;
3. The elderly and vulnerable are more susceptible to illnesses exacerbated by cold and may be already living with chronic illnesses;
4. There are reports of pneumonia in the park already;
5. Campers cannot safely leave their belongs to go to shelters, emergency response shelters, warming centres, or to the hospital for fear of having their belongings thrown away;
6. Shelters are too often full or not able to meet the needs of campers with partners, pets, or belongings;
7. Campers have had belongings destroyed or taken by City staff;
8. Park washrooms are only open until 5pm;
9. It is costly to pay City Engineering staff and Park Rangers to take down tents and clean-up garbage; and
10. While most people agree that tent cities are not a good way to live, when there is no housing or shelter available people can be safer in a tent city than being alone on the street.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT Park Board staff work with City staff to acquire or implement a warming station in Oppenheimer Park with large heated tents, staffed with Peer Workers to help ensure safety and cleanliness;
- B. THAT Park Board staff work with city staff to provide storage for belongings and washroom facilities for park patrons;
- C. THAT Park Board staff ensure there is a way for campers to keep and/or retrieve their possessions; and
- D. THAT staff working in Oppenheimer Park communicate with City staff about other possible solutions to humanize being homeless when there is no housing to move to.