



COMMISSIONER ENQUIRIES – SUMMARY REPORT

Date Received	Topic	Submitted By	Summary of request	Board Update
January 23, 2024	Available Shelter Space – Communication with Those Sheltering in Parks	Commissioner Bastovanszky	<p>As a Board we understand that Park Rangers have been upholding the Supreme Court ruling, allowing people to sleep overnight in parks, but having them move their tents through the day.</p> <p>Can Park Board staff enquire with City of Vancouver staff on the number of empty shelter beds available within the Vancouver, and how this information is being distributed by City and Park Board to those who are sheltering in parks?</p>	<p>What's available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are approximately 1400 year round shelter beds within the city of Vancouver - During Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Activations, this winter there are an additional 178 spaces available to those sheltering outdoors. The EWR program is funded and operated by BC Housing. - Additionally, when temperatures reach -4 (or feels like -4), and additional 186 spaces are available to those sheltering outdoors. The warming centre program is funded and operated by the City of Vancouver, and its non profit partners. - The year round shelter beds are, on average, at 90% occupancy. The occupancy information is managed by BC Housing who funds the Emergency Shelter Program. - We continue to work with BCH and other community partners to find additional spaces throughout the winter and year round. <p>Access to shelter beds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When there are encampments such as at Crab Park/Oppenheimer, the City's Outreach team has a shelter bed reservation system process in place with BC Housing, whereby shelter beds are held for a portion of the day for those sheltering in parks. Shelter offers are made every time Outreach team members interact with those sheltering outdoors. - Outside of the shelter referral system noted above, outreach team members will also call around to shelters as needed. - Park Rangers also reach out to Outreach staff to share information regarding individuals who may be ready to come indoors Outreach teams intentionally work separately from, and not alongside, Park Rangers when they are enforcing a by-law. The role of outreach workers is client centered and intended to provide offers of support with accessing, shelter, housing and other supports an individual experiencing homelessness may require. While the Park Rangers may also be offering information, the work of seeking or encouraging compliance with the Park Control by-law is separate and distinct. As such, the two teams do not work alongside one another given that their primary focus is different. - Park Rangers do have resource information on hand to support those in the moment if they are looking for showers, food, or a place to be inside for the day. - 211 is a service that is updated twice daily and is often a resource used to identify available shelter beds. All community organization can access this system in support of their unsheltered clients