
From: Park Board GM's Office
Sent: Tuesday, May 04, 2021 5:16 PM
To: PB Commissioners
Cc: PB SLT (Senior Leadership Team) - DL; PB Communications
Subject: Strathcona Park Encampment - Weekly Board Update - May 4, 2021

Dear Commissioners,

Please find below this week's update regarding the work of the City and Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to close the encampment in Strathcona Park. It is a day late due to the evolving situation in the park.

Moving people into accommodation

- By the end of day Friday, almost 300 people in total had moved from the park and the surrounding area into accommodation since October 2020, and approximately 230 people had moved in the last two weeks. These numbers represent a significant effort by staff, BC Housing and our non-profit partners who worked tirelessly to ensure that as many people as possible could move into warm, safe accommodation.
- People who had been living in the park were provided with moving bins and longer-term storage options when they moved inside. Many of them signed waivers that confirmed that any items they had left in the park could be disposed of.
- The encampment officially closed on Friday and anyone who arrived at the park over the weekend and requested accommodation after that date has been redirected to BC Housing's Orange Hall and other outreach teams, including PHS and the City's Homelessness Services team.

Events in the park this weekend

- City and Park Board staff focused on securing the park over the weekend by installing fencing around the perimeter of the east side of the park and attempting to establish a controlled entry/exit point.
- As you are likely aware from correspondence, there was a misunderstanding between camp leadership and staff which led to some conflicts in the park over the weekend. We have included some bullet points below which explains what occurred:
 - Despite the City and Park Board being very clear that the deadline for moving out of the park was Friday, a small number of people did not move their belongings out of the park by then. On Friday, an agreement was reached to enable people who had not signed waivers or given verbal confirmation to staff until 6 pm Sunday to gather any final belongings.
 - On Saturday, an agreement was made for approximately nine people who had not signed a waiver or given verbal confirmation to be able to access their sites in the gravel field area on Monday, May 3 until 6 pm to retrieve items. This extension included camp leadership.
 - On Saturday, following the closing ceremony, the fence was breached and a number of people came into the park. Staff secured the fencing and maintained controlled access through Saturday night.
 - On Sunday, we learned that many campers, including advocates, did not understand that the extension to Monday 6 pm was for a limited group of people and so there was expectation amongst some that it extended to everyone. After some discussion on Sunday, Parks staff extended to Monday 6 pm for everyone who had not signed waivers or given verbal confirmation to staff.

- On Sunday, staff began clearing up one area of the park where people who had signed waivers or given verbal confirmation had been sleeping. Staff did not do any work in the part of the park where the items for collection on Sunday or Monday were located.
- VPD were requested to attend the Park on Sunday to support the staff crews who were working as per standard operating procedures during an encampment. Additional VPD officers were called in when bystanders started issuing threats to staff.
- On Sunday, people again broke through the perimeter fence and retrieved items from items. Staff who observed this confirmed that people are retrieving items from across multiple site (i.e., not all are their own belongings)
- On Monday, people continued to break through the perimeter fence and there is active removal of items by people across multiple camp sites.
- On Monday late afternoon, camp leadership (Chrissy Brett) requested an additional day for packing and this has been granted and she has until 6pm today, Tuesday, to move her possessions from the park. In order to ensure a trauma-informed approach to supporting Ms. Brett to exit the park, staff have agreed to pause on clean-up work in the park until 6pm today.

Next steps

- Staff continue to attempt to maintain the perimeter fence and to manage a controlled entry.
- Apart from repairing damaged fencing, staff onsite have paused cleaning and remediation work in the park until 6 pm today.
- After that time, the park will become an active work site where heavy equipment is being used and access will not be granted while this work takes place. While we respect the right of people to protest, the safety of people in and around the park is our priority.
- Our goal remains to carry out this work peacefully and respectfully and to ensure a trauma-informed lens is applied in our interactions with campers, including camp leadership.
- Staff will continue to assess the situation as it unfolds, and evaluate our options.

Regards,

Donnie



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pronouns: she/they

I live and work on the unceded, ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəjəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.