



March 20, 2023

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners, Park Board Leadership Team

FROM : Betty Lepps, Acting General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Vanier Park Temporary Structure Update**

Hello Commissioners:

You may have been contacted by residents near Vanier Park about temporary structures and people sheltering there. We received media requests for updates over the weekend and earlier today and wanted to ensure you had the latest information on this situation.

- Our Urban Relationships and Park Ranger teams have been and continue to be in contact with the 2-3 people sheltering in Vanier Park. They have visited numerous times to speak with the residents, and have been working with them to reduce the footprint of the encampment. The Homelessness Services Outreach from City of Vancouver have also attended, but the individuals have not been willing to engage. We understand and recognize that people have experiences that lead them to choose not to move into housing or shelter.
- What is important to note is that situations such as these are extremely complex and require coordination. Park Rangers will continue to coordinate with Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, and City of Vancouver staff to meet with residents concerning the footprint of the structure, and potentially hazardous materials that could impact the park. We will provide updates as this work progresses.
- The scale of the homelessness crisis in Vancouver is such that there are people sleeping in tents and other structures in neighbourhoods across the city - this situation in Kitsilano is not unique. Park Rangers have tracked a major increase in calls regarding people sheltering in parks. Comparing January 2022 to January 2023, they saw an increase in calls from 186 to 322.
- We continue to work with City of Vancouver on solutions and are grateful for support from the Province to build more supportive and social housing, deploy shelters, and address the income and service needs of people who have no housing as municipalities such as Vancouver cannot address this crisis alone with our limited resources.

Please let us know if you have any further questions about this update.

Betty Lepps
Director, Urban Relationships
Acting General Manager, Parks and Recreation