



Nelson Committee on Homelessness

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SANCTIONED ENCAMPMENT BEHIND CIVIC CENTRE WILL PROVIDE SAFE SPACE FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT A HOME TO SELF-ISOLATE

“Stay home and self-isolate.” When it comes to ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ‘flatten the curve’, this advice has become commonplace among Government and Health officials. After all, physical distancing lowers transmission rates, and staying home is the ultimate form of physical distancing.

But what if you didn’t have a home? How would you self-isolate in order to protect yourself and your community? Police Chief Paul Burkart says a sanctioned encampment being set-up behind the Civic Centre “will offer folks without a home a safe place to self-isolate in order to protect themselves and others. The encampment is a key piece of Nelson’s emergency response to COVID-19 for vulnerable persons, and is also important for the safety, health, and well-being of our community at large.”

“In keeping with the Centre for Disease Control’s recommendation that campsites each be 12x12 ft in order to maintain proper physical distancing, the encampment will have space for 8 individuals to hunker down in tents”, notes Mayor John Dooley. “Additionally, the site will have porta potties with hand wash stations, scheduled shower access, and outreach and security staff to support folks and keep the space safe and comfortable for everyone.”

Importantly, the encampment is only for folks who do not have any COVID-19 symptoms. BC Housing, Interior Health, the City of Nelson, and homeless-serving agencies are collaboratively working towards securing other sites, such as motel rooms, for quarantine and isolation should someone develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

“COVID-19 is shining a very bright light on the need for supportive housing and health programming for our most vulnerable”, says Jenny Robinson, Executive Director of Nelson CARES Society. “People need a home every day but especially in a time of crisis.”

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Member Organizations: Nelson CARES (Ward St. Place, Stepping Stones, Transitional Housing, Affordable Housing, Advocacy Centre); Nelson Community Services Centre (Cicada Place, Youth Services & Outreach, Street Outreach, Homeless Outreach/Prevention, Women’s Outreach & Shelter); Salvation Army; Kootenay Christian Fellowship (Our Daily Bread); Nelson Women’s Centre; ANKORS; City of Nelson Councillor representation; Anderson Gardens (CMHA), Nelson Youth Centre, Kootenay Career Development Services, Kootenay Kids, Nelson Community Food Centre, St. Saviour’s Food Pantry; Nelson MHSU Office; Selkirk College Students’ Union representation