



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maple Ridge Council Holds Special Meeting To Discuss Letter From Minister Rich Coleman

Maple Ridge, BC: On Wednesday, March 16, 2016 Maple Ridge Council held a Special Council Meeting, following up on an urgent matter that came before them at the Monday, March 14 Workshop Meeting.

At the Monday, March 14 meeting Chief Administrative Officer Ted Swabey made a presentation to Council outlining the timeline relating to the BC Housing proposal to purchase the Quality Inn and to convert it into a supportive housing facility. Council was concerned because of comments that were made on social media by MLA Doug Bing that indicated that he was not supportive of the Quality Inn location and that the local MLAs were not on board with the Provincial Government's plan and this was creating uncertainty in the community.

Council passed a motion at the Monday, March 14 Workshop that a letter be sent to Minister Rich Coleman asking for clarity because the extension of the interim shelter and the supportive housing proposal for the Quality Inn are Provincial initiatives.

The formal reply from the Minister was received on Wednesday and Council called a special meeting, on short notice, to discuss the letter. The letter, which is attached to this release, reaffirmed the Ministers' commitment that the Quality Inn location is the best location.

In his letter Minister Coleman says, "We have committed to a public information session where RainCity Housing and BC Housing can respond to the community on the operational aspects of the Quality Inn." The letter did not include any comments relating to the local MLAs' position on the Province's offer relating to the Quality Inn supportive housing proposal.

On Wednesday, March 16, Council discussed the response and passed the following motions; “That before proceeding further with its proposal to provide supportive housing in Maple Ridge, the Provincial Government commit to including in its public forum, information about the design and operations of the facility, and an opportunity for the public to ask questions and receive answers.”

“That before proceeding further with its proposal to provide supportive housing in Maple Ridge, the Provincial Government confirm that MLA Doug Bing and MLA Marc Dalton are supportive of the Quality Inn location.”

The first motion was in response to concerns that were expressed by the community that the proposed information session would be an ‘open house’ format rather than have a question and answer format. The second motion seeks to get a formal position from each of the local MLAs relating to the supportive housing project proposal from BC Housing.

After the motions were passed, Council opened the floor for questions and for the next two hours heard questions and comments from the public.

Council heard comments relating to the impacts of locating the supportive housing facility at the Quality Inn location including specific concerns on issues such as:

- The lack of consultation with the residents and local businesses.
- The security and safety of the neighbourhood.
- The operational model of the facility.
- The number of beds proposed versus the current number of people needing housing.
- The health care supports that would be provided at the facility.
- The impact of losing the hotel rooms to the local economy.
- Concerns that the facility would attract people from other regions to Maple Ridge.
- The process going forward.

Most of the questions that were asked related to matters that are the responsibility of the Provincial Government and BC Housing. City Council committed to ensuring that the questions would be forwarded to BC Housing so that they can be addressed at the community forum that is being planned. The date, time and location of the BC Housing community forum has not been announced. Council committed to ensuring that when the details are announced, the City will share the information widely across all communications channels.



March 15, 2016

Her Worship Mayor Nicole Read
and Members of Council
City of Maple Ridge
11995 Haney Place
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 6A9

Via email: nread@mapleridge.ca

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to you in response to the following motion passed at yesterday's Council regarding supportive housing in Maple Ridge.

The Province is committed to working with you to address the housing issues faced in your community. To that end, we have partnered with you on the temporary shelter and have agreed to purchase and refurbish the Quality Inn on Lougheed Highway to move individuals into more appropriate interim housing and permit the closure of the shelter. We have acquired and renovated many buildings across British Columbia, like the Quality Inn, and we have found they provide an excellent stock of housing for individuals who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.

We have also committed to a public information session where Raincity Housing and BC Housing can respond to the community on the operational aspects of the Quality Inn. Raincity is an experienced housing provider and because of their management of the shelter, are very familiar with the clients and their needs. There will be full 24/7 staffing and support services as well as partnerships with Fraser Health to ensure the success of the Quality Inn. The Province is also committed to secure the appropriate zoning for the property.

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**Minister of
Natural Gas Development
and Minister Responsible
for Housing
and Deputy Premier**

Office of the Minister

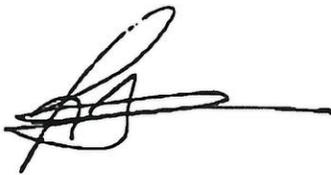
**Mailing Address:
PO Box 9052, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2**

**Telephone: 250 953-0900
Facsimile: 250 953-0927**

Over the longer term, we will work with you to identify the need for a purpose built shelter and transition housing development. In return for the Province providing the capital and the operating funding, our expectation is that Maple Ridge provides an appropriate site at a nominal cost and waives applicable fees and charges. This is the same expectation of all local governments as we have a collective responsibility to respond to the need for shelters and supportive housing across British Columbia.

Homelessness is a complex issue and requires all of us to work together.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rich Coleman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rich Coleman
Minister and Deputy Premier