



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Maple Ridge Files Lawsuit Seeking Injunction to End Occupation of St. Anne Property

Maple Ridge, BC: On Tuesday, May 30, the City of Maple Ridge initiated legal proceedings in British Columbia Supreme Court, seeking injunctions intended to end the unauthorized occupation of the St. Anne property located west of 223 Street between North Avenue and St. Anne Avenue east of the Haney Bypass.

The occupation of the St. Anne property commenced on May 2, 2017 when a group broke through a security fence surrounding the property with the intention of establishing a protest camp. Security fencing had been installed around the property by the City some months earlier in an effort to curb intermittent overnight camping and unlawful dumping on the property and in anticipation of the development of the property into an urban City park.

The City considers the unauthorized camp to be both a trespass on City property and a breach of City bylaws and has, since May 2, been unsuccessfully attempting to obtain the voluntary agreement of those in the camp to leave.

The current legal action is being taken primarily as a result of the City's health and safety concerns for both the surrounding residential neighbourhood and the St. Anne property itself and, furthermore, concerns relating to physical harm to the property and delays to the City's park development plans. The City is aware, for example, of several rudimentary latrines having been dug into the property, used hypodermic needles being discarded on the property and garbage collecting on the property.

The conditions within the unauthorized camp and the impact on the surrounding neighbourhood have been the source of a large number of complaints to the City, and with many residents urging the City to take legal action. Of particular concern are the reports of human waste, garbage and used drug paraphernalia both on the St. Anne property and being found on nearby private properties. Additional reports indicate the size of the camp may actually be growing; further deepening the City's concern.

The City cares for the well-being of the homeless in the community and has been working with the Provincial Government and community partners to address the need for additional affordable housing in the City. The City has abided by what it understands to be the legal requirement to make park areas available for the temporary overnight refuge of those seeking shelter, and had previously opened two nearby City parks to this use.

The injunction application will be heard on Monday, June 5 in Vancouver.

For more information on this news release please contact Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Office at tswabey@mapleridge.ca or by phone at 604-463-5221.