



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date June 21, 2017 #17-29

For further information, contact:
Ted Swabey at 604-463-5221
tswabey@mapleridge.ca

June 21 Update: City of Maple Ridge Injunction Application

Maple Ridge, BC: On June 20, the City of Maple Ridge asked the BC Supreme Court for an adjournment of the hearing of the City's injunction application to consider the large volume of evidence which had been filed on behalf of those occupying the St. Anne protest camp, and to ensure that sufficient court time is available to hear the City's application in its entirety. The Court has ordered that the hearing be set over for a two-day hearing on June 28 and 29.

On June 16, the lawyers representing the people occupying the St. Anne property filed numerous defence documents, which included a number of affidavits from people in the camp and community members, as well as supporting documents and reports relating to the challenges faced by the homeless, both generally and specifically those in Maple Ridge. These documents describe, amongst other things, the conditions relating to homelessness in Maple Ridge, incidents of violence and persecution suffered by homeless individuals in the City and current lack of housing.

On June 19, the City's legal team briefed Council on the status of the legal action, the evidence filed on behalf of those occupying the property, and the possible outcomes of the court action. Council thereafter directed that the legal action be paused in order to address immediate health and safety issues pertaining to those on the St. Anne property, and to redirect the focus of the City's efforts away from the prosecution of the lawsuit and towards advocating for the Provincial Government to develop and execute a housing and health care strategy to address the issues at the core of the St. Anne protest camp.

Every community in BC is dealing with issues of homelessness in one form or another. Managing the issues around homelessness, mental health and addiction represent a significant cost in human resources and direct costs for municipal governments. The City of Maple Ridge recognizes that solutions need to come from the Provincial Government and that the downloading of the management of this issue on local taxpayers is no longer acceptable. Nevertheless, the City accepts its role in helping and protecting the lives of its homeless residents.

To this end, the City's legal team met with the legal representatives of the camp on June 20 to begin the process of discussing issues which are a priority for all parties. As a result of those discussions, the City has decided to authorize the placement of portable toilets on the property and is considering other requests. The City supports the health and safety concerns of both camp residents and the neighbours of the property being suitably addressed. The City will be

working with camp residents occupying the property and neighbours of the property on an ongoing basis to ensure the health and safety of those both on and off the site.

The camp residents have also communicated that they understand and accept that the camp must be maintained in a manner which ensures the safety of those in the camp, and with a minimum disruption to neighbours of the property.

Moving forward the City will focus its effort on lobbying the Provincial Government, BC Housing and Fraser Health for housing and health care support that will make the camp unnecessary. The City recognizes that the encampment on the St. Anne property is not the solution, and the City's goal is to achieve a voluntary decampment once suitable housing alternatives are available.

The City will continue to monitor the camp on the St. Anne property, and intends to continue to suspend the injunction lawsuit and take no active steps to prosecute it so long as conditions on the St. Anne property do not become so unsafe for those on the property or in the surrounding community that the City is required to ask for the assistance of the court. The City endeavours to provide resources to the camp, where possible, to ensure that this does not happen.

Further updates will be provided as new information becomes available.