



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Proposed BBQ at Cliff Avenue Homeless Camp Not Sanctioned by City**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** Some local advocates have been posting notices around the community relating to a proposed BBQ on Saturday, June 6. The organizers of the event are the Social Housing Alliance BC. The event has not been planned in consultation with the City of Maple Ridge or approved through the City's event approval process.

"I had the opportunity to speak with a representative of the Social Housing Alliance BC, the organizers of this event, and express my concern that this BBQ might provoke greater concern regarding the situation on Cliff Avenue," said Maple Ridge Mayor Nicole Read. "Right now there is tremendous pressure on Council to react the way that cities usually do and break up the camp. The organizers of this event have not reached out to me, or anyone on our staff, to talk about the implications of this event. The organizers say that they want to end, not hide, homelessness, which is exactly what we are working to do. However, the residents on Cliff Avenue, and the community as a whole, need this situation to stabilize and give the addiction, mental health and housing experts the opportunity to engage with the people in the camp and find those permanent solutions. The people that are camping on Cliff Avenue already have a strong voice in the work that is underway in our community. I have personally reached out to ensure that this is the case. It is important that other groups don't step in and speak on their behalf and change the dynamic. This will undermine their voice and their personal stories," she added.

"I have made the offer to the organizers of the event to meet with me and for us to have a discussion about ways the Social Housing Alliance BC can be a force to help our homeless population move forward, rather than inflame a community that is struggling with the issues

around the camp,” said the Mayor. She continued, “The citizens of our community have demonstrated an abundance of compassion and patience, and I urge the organizers to call off the event and meet with our Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative Team to discover ways we can work together on real solutions.”

The Mayor’s Homelessness Solutions task Force transitioned to a new name, the Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative, at an announcement on Thursday, May 26. A recording of that event is available on the City website at

<http://media.mapleridge.ca/Mediasite/Play/bde1e63121d844c2b034a62a16c592d21d?catalog=5edbe186-9ec4-4ad9-ab81-cdcfe0767b63>

The City hopes that the Social Housing Alliance BC will work with the Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative to find solutions for the benefit of our local homeless population rather than remaining focused on creating a media event.

For more information please contact Mayor Nicole Read by email at [nread@mapleridge.ca](mailto:nread@mapleridge.ca) or by phone at 604-463-5221.