

TOWN OF SIDNEY
MINUTES OF EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

March 17, 2021 10:00AM

PRESENT: R. Humble; Chief Mikkelsen; Councillor T. O’Keeffe; Staff Sergeant Conley;
A. Hicik; A. Verhagen; W. Maxwell; B. DeMaere; B. Robinson; D. Barner; L. Witzer

ABSENT: Sergeant Cook; CPL Harding; Deputy Chief Harman, C. Newcomb; S. Nelson;
J. Joe; S. Jones

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chief Mikkelsen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Staff Sergeant Conley, seconded by A. Verhagen, that the Agenda of the Emergency Planning Committee Meeting of March 17, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Councillor T. O’Keeffe, seconded by B. DeMeare, that the Minutes of the Emergency Planning Committee Meeting of February 17, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Senior Care Facilities Update

In D/C Harman’s absence, the Chair reported that D/C Harman continues to be in weekly contact with the Senior Care Facilities. The facilities are reporting that now almost 100% of independent residents have also received their vaccinations. Feels confident saying that all facilities are essentially completed all first doses of their vaccinations.

b. Mass Emergency Notification Service Provider

D. Barner advised the transition to the new provider (Connect Rocket) is well underway. Existing subscribers to the current platform would have received two notifications prompting them to register for the new one. Has been tremendously successful; 85% of subscribers have re-registered. From staff perspective this transition has been essentially seamless and extremely positive. Residents are commenting it is user friendly which is evident in the success so far.

Councillor O’Keeffe and D. Barner clarified the current strategy for existing subscribers. Any individual that had previously signed up for notifications would have received push messaging encouraging them to re-register. The intent is to give current subscribers time to re-subscribe so there isn’t a lapse in service and they continue to receive notifications. Residents can sign up at any time.

Saanich Peninsula Alert has been advertised in the Peninsula News Review, throughout the community in public places such as the Mary Winspear Centre, on social media, websites, and will be featured in upcoming Town Talks. In previous (pre-COVID) times, the Chair has provided presentations to the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. and has encouraged businesses to promote staff to sign up for notifications. Councillor O’Keeffe will work with D. Barner to engage these groups.

c. UBCM Grant Application for Evacuation Route Planning

D. Barner reiterated that at the February meeting The Chair reported that the Town of Sidney received confirmation of a successful application for a \$21,000 grant for evacuation route planning through UBCM. D/C Harman has since then engaged with Smart Risk Inc. (Jim LaMorte) to be the Town’s consultant for completing these plans. Smart Risk will begin work on March 29th and anticipates completion for July 31st.

d. Partnership with UVIC for Introduction to Emergency Management for Business Continuity Course

D. Barner reported that this course has been delayed due to low admission rates. UVIC assumes this is due to COVID-19 and it being a brand new course. Target is to resume for mid-May. Will keep committee apprised.

6. NEW BUSINESS**a. PHO Gatherings and Events Order Revision and Town Park Use Permits**

D. Barner shared that under the new PHO Gatherings and Events Order, gatherings outdoors of up to 10 people are now permissible. Town staff have been

in discussions as to whether the Town should give consideration to allowing Park Use Permits in light of this change.

A. Verhagen advised that the anticipated influx of requests for Park Use Permits since the announcement of the new lifted restrictions simply has not occurred. The committee shared concerns over the perception of permitting events and gatherings when the Town does not have the means to oversee them. Most of these permits occur after-hours and staff do not have the capacity to enforce the restrictions are being adhered to. The Town can alter the permit process; however this becomes difficult as restrictions are subject to change and permits can be booked well in advance. Committee agreed the least liability and responsibility defaults to not issuing permits at this time and allowing the public to use park spaces at their discretion without reserving them through a permit. Staff will continue to monitor requests and if further research and discussion is required, will bring to the committee.

b. Mary Winspear Centre COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic

The Chair shared that he has visited the recently operating COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Mary Winspear Centre. Appears very organized, efficient, and well run. Hearing positive feedback from the staff and the community as well.

7. ROUNDTABLE

R. Humble updated the committee that the vulnerable population is still receiving wellness checks daily, primarily by bylaw and the safety officer. Iroquois, Tulista, and Beacon Parks all seem to be areas of focus. There has been a slight reduction in the amount of overnight stays in Iroquois Park (approximately four down to two).

Councillor O’Keeffe sought clarity in the housing supports offered to this population. Staff Sergeant Conley advised that every Wednesday an outreach worker attends Sidney. R. Humble further explained that in the past these individuals have been provided a list of facilities (shelters and housing options) that exist and are available to them, but many choose to remain in Sidney. The Chair detailed there is a triage process to being eligible to longer term housing. Risk factors such as subject to violence; substance abuse; and adamant refusal eliminates not only applicants but also location options; making them more challenging to place.

Staff Sergeant Conley shared that the RCMP is seeing a significant amount of our senior population falling victims to scams and theft. Will be increasing public awareness on how to protect yourself from such fraud. The Chair offered that if the Town can support any communication around this initiative to engage with Administration staff or D. Barner to facilitate.

8. NEXT MEETING

10:00am, April 21st, 2021 via Zoom.

Committee will continue to meet monthly during the COVID-19 pandemic until the committee agrees to resume to the regularly scheduled quarterly meetings.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by A. Verhagen, seconded by R. Humble, that the meeting adjourn at 10:39.

MOTION CARRIED



CHAIR