



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, May 18, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council passes motion to address homeless crisis in Barrie

(Barrie, ON) – Last night at the Barrie City Council meeting, Council passed a motion directing staff to investigate and take action on a series of initiatives aimed at addressing the chronic homeless situation in Barrie and creating a safer community for everyone.

“We want to ensure people get the supports and services they need and the best way to do that is to support people in our publicly funded shelter system,” said Mayor Alex Nuttall. “Having a roof, heat, running water and food is the starting point and then the shelter system can connect people with the services and support they need. The province in the 2023 Budget announced an 86% increase in homelessness support for Simcoe County so now is the time to act to ensure the most vulnerable people in our community are connected with the services that are available.”

In January 2022 the homeless enumeration was conducted in Simcoe County and 722 people were counted as experiencing homelessness. Of this number at least 50% are homeless in Barrie. 15% of those homeless and surveyed in Barrie have moved here in the past year.

The complete motion follows.

1. *That the Chief Administrative Officer consider/utilize the following options to address chronic homelessness and enhance public safety in the City of Barrie:*
 - a) *Request Funding from the Province of Ontario for:*
 - i) *additional financial support for the Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic to provide more beds and to increase the hours of operation; and*
 - ii) *for a similar organization that provides long-term counselling and treatment.*
 - b) *Approve funding for the following:*
 - i) *a Family Re-unification Fund to pay for the transportation costs and help re-unite individuals with families or support groups.*
 - ii) *the operation of a shuttle service for individuals released from the Central North Correctional Centre;*
 - iii) *a Cooling and Warming Centre for at-risk individuals and the provision of daily meal programs that are currently being offered on public lands and in public parks over multiple years;*
 - iv) *to the Salvation Army or a similar organization to support a lunch program; and*
 - v) *for food security programs through local agencies to reduce the needs associated with panhandling.*



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- c) *Request permanent funding from the Province of Ontario and the County of Simcoe for the County of Simcoe's mobile outreach pilot program in downtown Barrie, if deemed to be successful by the City of Barrie and the County of Simcoe.*
 - d) *Changes to the City's By-laws, protocols, and processes to:*
 - i) *prohibit the use or distribution of tents or tarps in public parks or on public lands without a permit;*
 - ii) *prohibit the distribution of food and grocery products in public spaces without the use of a permit; and*
 - iii) *reduce the time required to address camping in parks and storage of goods in parks or public spaces.*
 - e) *Methods to prohibit the payment to panhandlers on City Streets, intersections, and highway ramps.*
 - f) *The placement of signs on City off-ramps to discourage panhandling or financial support thereof and encouraging donations to local social service agencies.*
 - g) *Work with the County of Simcoe and Province of Ontario on ways to build more supportive housing for community members experiencing adverse mental health or addictions.*
 - h) *Appeal to the County of Simcoe for funding to help individuals transition from unemployment to employment through training opportunities.*
 - i) *Schedule a public meeting to be held at the Community Safety Committee regarding the chronic homelessness, addictions and mental health supports in the City of Barrie.*
 - j) *Have staff apply for any provincial or federal funding opportunities available to support the options outlined this motion.*
2. *That funding of up to \$825,000 per annum for 2 years from the Re-Investment Reserve be made available to fund any of the options detailed in paragraph 1 that are undertaken, as required.*
3. *That, if necessary, the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to waive the City's purchasing by-law to award any items or services required to undertake the options listed in paragraph 1.*
4. *That the Chief Administrative Officer provide quarterly updates to the Community Safety Committee regarding the effectiveness of the options that are undertaken as part of this motion.*



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For more information, please contact:
Scott LaMantia
Manager of Marketing & Communications
scott.lamantia@barrie.ca
705-794-0517