

DATE: September 4, 2018

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Ian Wells, General Manager, Planning and Development

SUBJECT: 2018 Downtown Seasonal Bylaw Compliance Team

ATTACHMENT(S): Downtown Bylaw Compliance Team Presentation

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION, the report dated September 4, 2018 from the General Manager of Planning and Development, titled "2018 Downtown Seasonal Bylaw Compliance Team".

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to bring Council up to date on the activities and results of the Downtown Bylaw Compliance Team activities for the summer of 2018 up to the end of August.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The information being provided is consistent with Council's strategy to update and improve systems to ensure appropriate and valid customer service delivery.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

In May of this year, Bylaw Services hired two temporary staff members on a 5 month trial basis as Bylaw Compliance Assistants to form a Downtown Bylaw Compliance Team with a goal to enhance health, safety and security in the Downtown and surrounding area. The team of Denton Johnson and Adrian Hebert were selected commenced work in mid-May.

The team selected brought a combination of several years' experience being employed as Correctional Officers in addition to having completed courses on Bylaw Enforcement, Dealing with Mentally Disordered Offenders, Building a Respectful Work Place, Interpersonal and Negotiation Skills, Conflict Resolution and Understanding Diversity, Mental Health and Homelessness.

The goal of the team was to proactively deal with growing perceptions of health, security and safety concerns posed by some of the individuals living on the streets in the downtown and surrounding area. Over the past couple of years there has been an increase in people occupying public and private properties without permission, leaving waste and debris, including drug paraphernalia and creating a sense of discomfort to downtown employees, residents and service providers as a result of the behaviors exhibited by some.

This proactive two person team of Bylaw Compliance Assistants focused on ensuring public spaces including parkades, open spaces, alleys and streets were kept clean and safe for the community. One

of the major tasks involved performing minor clean ups, managing larger clean ups caused by short and long term encampments and providing an extra level of security to the downtown. The team interacted regularly with and provided assistance to our regular compliment of Bylaw Enforcement Officers, the RCMP Downtown Safety Unit, Downtown Prince George and a number of social agencies that provide assistance to the community.

Between May 15th and August 31st the team dealt with over 600 documented contacts and incidents of improper disposal of waste and individuals camped out on public or private property in the downtown area. Approximately 95% of those incidents were a result of the team's proactive monitoring and patrolling. Incidents related to persons camped on private or public property from May 1st to the end of August totaled 571, compared to just 72 in the same period in 2017.

A typical day for the team started at 7:00 AM by doing a sweep of the downtown looking for persons camped out in public and private spaces without authority. The team's goal was to have persons clean up any mess or nuisance created and ensure the area did not present a health and safety risk. The team identified several regular locations of concern that were being regularly used.

Those locations included:

- Plaza Parkade on 5th Avenue
- George Street near the Court House
- 3rd Avenue near the Needle Exchange
- 2nd Avenue near St Vincent de Pauls
- Canada Games Plaza
- Patricia Boulevard
- Lower Patricia Boulevard
- Ingledew Park
- Connaught Hill

After doing the initial sweep of the area, the team would do a second check of locations they found to be of concern, to ensure persons were moved along and debris was cleaned up. Any debris left behind would be collected and disposed of.

The team took 54 loads of waste and debris, with a weight totaling 3530 kgs, to the Foothills Landfill. The majority of the debris taken to the landfill consisted of soiled mattresses, bike parts, wooden pallets, clothing, general garbage, drug paraphernalia, contaminated cardboard, and Styrofoam insulation.

As mentioned the team regularly picked up used syringes and associated paraphernalia from both public and private property. While numbers and amounts have not been completely tracked, the team did do so for the entire month of August. The Team picked up over 3, 19 liter pails of this type of waste during the month. In addition to used paraphernalia, they found numerous new unopened syringes still in boxes.

Support of the business community has been very positive on the work the team has done to date, including comments regarding the timeliness of addressing issues, as well as the courteous and empathetic attitude shown by the staff. Feedback received from providers of social services in the downtown has also been very positive to date. One example was a phone call from Reconnect Youth Shelter in early August to let Management know how impressed they were of the respect and kindness the team showed a couple camped out near their facility. They were surprised to see the team seemed to have built a relationship with the couple, because the team was able to call them by name and treated them with respect.

The program was funded for 5 months which would take the trial to the middle of October. Unfortunately, one of the team has accepted a position with another employer and left as of September 5th, but the City has extended the other team members employment until the end of October. He will be assisted by our regular staff members when required.

Conclusion:

The number of incidents dealt with by the team represents a 43% increase in the calls for service for the Division over the same period in 2017. Without these positions, the City's current complement of Bylaw Enforcement Officers would not have been able to deal with these situations as effectively and still provide our regular services to the community.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Wells", written in a cursive style.

Ian Wells, General Manager, Planning and Development/
Acting City Manager

Meeting date: September 17, 2018

Prepared by: Fred Crittenden, Manager Bylaw Services