

Memo from Mayor Bob K. Day

## Sheltering of Unsheltered Residents

### Background:

The purpose of this memo is to bring forth a resolution to determine whether to provide temporary shelter and protection from the elements for residents who currently have no shelter.

Last Summer the Town of Lake Cowichan Council gave support through a resolution to support a Regional Grant application to the UBCM Strengthening Communities Services funding stream. The application was for several custom-built sleeping cabins to be placed in municipalities that were specified in the application. In the grant application, the Town of Lake Cowichan was specified as requesting 6 sleeping cabins. The grant application was successful and 36 of the 42 units have been placed at a location on Trunk Road in Duncan, BC on property owned by BC Housing.

We were officially informed on Feb. 10, 2022, that the six remaining cabins are in storage at the manufacturers site in Cobble Hill, BC. awaiting placement along with a washroom unit.

### Analysis:

In the summer of 2021, it was determined by professionals who service the unsheltered population, that there were up to 6 unhoused residents in our community who have been residents of the area for at least 1 year or more. On Feb. 10, 2021, it was reported at a roundtable discussion that the current number of unhoused residents is between 2 and 4 individuals. These numbers were confirmed by the RCMP and the Nurse Practitioner and Cowichan Lake Community Services, all of which who have had regular contact with the unsheltered individuals.

This memo is not intended to suggest that the proposed sleeping cabins become permanent housing for the affected individuals, but rather a place where enhanced services can be provided on a temporary basis to assist those who are unsheltered to move towards a more permanent and safer way of living with or without an ongoing support system.

### Recommendations:

1) That Council direct staff to establish a task force that consists of one member of Town staff, a representative from Cowichan Lake Community Services, a representative from Our Cowichan Communities Health Network, a representative from Island Health and a liaison from Lake Cowichan Council. This task force will undertake the following:

- Identify a location on public or private land that will allow the placement of up to 4 sleeping cabins and one washroom unit under a temporary use permit for a pilot project of up to one year.

- Devise a set of admission criteria and regulations for potential residents of sleeping cabins using examples from neighbouring sites.

-To agree upon an appropriate service plan to accommodate a site with up to four sleeping cabins that can be properly resourced.

OR

2)That Council direct staff to inform Cowichan Housing Association that the Town of Lake Cowichan will not be moving forward with the placement of the available, six sleeping cabins and one washroom unit.

Financial Implications:

Unlike other municipalities that have much larger clusters of these sleeping cabins at multiple sites, we are only considering temporarily housing for up to 4 individuals at one site. At this time there are limited services being provided by various agencies and authorities to the unsheltered residents of the Town due to funding and resource limitations.

To be successful, there needs to be some additional resources directed toward this project to make it safe and productive for the individuals it will serve.

The required additional resources are as follows:

- additional funding for site supervision to a service provider. i.e.: Lookout Society, Cowichan Lake Community Services
- enhanced services from Island Health to serve individuals with mental health or addiction issues.

