

## City Purchases Land for Supportive Housing

The City of Parksville, working together with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has acquired 222 Corfield Street in Parksville for the purpose of building affordable and supportive housing. The City of Parksville, the RDN, MLA Michelle Stillwell, the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, Island Crisis Care Society, Forward House Community Society and Society of Organized Services have been working together to address the housing affordability issues currently facing the Oceanside region. These include not just homelessness, but also a lack of affordable housing and supportive housing as people and families transition from being homeless or at risk of homelessness to living and working independently in the community. The purchase of the Corfield Street property is an important step towards addressing housing needs in Parksville and the Oceanside region.

Recognizing the cost to purchase the land would be prohibitive for Parksville taxpayers, the RDN, representing the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and RDN Electoral Areas E, F, G and H, agreed to fund the cost of the land based on tax assessments, by providing a grant-in-aid to the City for \$700,000 to cover the land acquisition, legal agreements and transfer of the land to the City. In the event a facility is not built or is built and ceases to operate, the land will revert back to the RDN to be sold and funds repaid to the local governments and electoral areas which provided the grant-in-aid.

Related to this acquisition, BC Housing has awarded \$30,000 in funding to the Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS) to develop plans for supportive housing, a shelter and ancillary services in the City of Parksville. With the acquisition of 222 Corfield Street, the ICCS can now develop plans specifically for that property and move to the next phase of project development. The Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness will now begin a public information process to inform residents about plans for the proposed facility.

ICCS is an organization with a wealth of experience operating similar facilities in the City of Nanaimo and with support from Forward House Community Society and the Society of Organized Services has created a strong team to bring these much needed services to the most vulnerable in our community.

City of Parksville Mayor, Marc Lefebvre, said, "We believe acquisition of the Corfield Street property indicates the City of Parksville is committed to working with the region and to finding solutions to address issues related to homelessness and to meet the needs of the diverse groups in our community. We look forward to community support for the project."

"Providing opportunities for stable, affordable housing for residents is a priority of the RDN Board," said RDN Board Chair Bill Veenhof. "Meeting regional housing needs requires collaboration with member municipalities, other levels of government and the many non-profits in our region with experience in addressing housing issues. This is one of those important collaborations and we are proud to be part of it."

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### For more information:

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