

## Information Note

Date: January 12, 2016

Cliff #:

Issue: Unauthorized Camping at 850 Burdett (Victoria Courthouse)

### Conclusion / Next Steps (if any):

- s.13

### Background / Facts:

- This Information Note is an update from December 7, 2015 regarding approval for the distribution of information flyer.
- In summary, until approximately November 15, 2015, homeless persons using the grounds numbered six at the most. s.13

s.13

s.13

Word spread through the homeless community that campers were being tolerated at the site and it became a local media story by November 23, 2015. This drew other homeless persons and advocates to the location. At that time, due to conflicting direction from the Province, Victoria Police ceased enforcement action and the situation quickly escalated.

- Since November 25, 2015, Shared Services of British Columbia (SSBC) staff have been in regular dialogue with City officials, Victoria Police, Victoria Fire Services, BC Housing, community outreach organizations, and JAG/Courts Services to maintain situational awareness on the situation and to identify mutual priorities.
- Timeline:
  - November 27 – To address sanitation risks, portable toilets and garbage bins supplied by Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens Services (MTICS).
  - Minister Coleman announced December 1, 2015 that his Ministry would fund a temporary 40 bed 24/7 shelter and discounted the likelihood for the need for an injunction. While this is an unquestionably positive development, City staff have framed the event as a unilateral announcement that changed their relationship with the School Board and adjacent residents.
  - December 24 - Police report an altercation between two campers that results in a non-fatal stabbing. Suspect apprehended and portion of camp temporarily cordoned off as a crime scene.
  - December 27 - Police report fatal drug overdose, Coroner investigation underway.
  - January 4 - My Place transitional house opens 40 sleeping mats at City owned building at 1240 Yates Street. \$400,000 provided by BC Housing to operate until April 30, 2016.
  - January 6 – Real Property Division (RPD), Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Brian Fellows and Executive Director (ED) Jon Burbee attends 'healing circle' to inform campers that the Province wishes to return site to its original use.
  - January 8 – RPD ED Jon Burbee and another staff member attends 'healing circle' to reiterate request to vacate and distribute/post the information flyer.

- January 8 – Police, Fire Department (FD) and Provincial Contractors attend site in effort to extinguish and remove burning barrel due to 9 respiratory complaints from adjacent property occupants attributed to the fire. FD met with verbal abuse and threats of resistance from campers. s.13,s.14  
s.13,s.14
- Currently approximately 100 campers on site; 27 campers have relocated to My Place transitional house. Assessment from first responders is that campers are now less cooperative and tensions are escalating.  
● s.13
- RPD staff have consulted with the Provincial Fire Commissioner, the Provincial Health Officer, and the Regional Health Officer for advice and they advise that all legal measures are already in place via existing legislation and bylaws and that the current situation would not warrant further intervention from their offices.
- The site has also served as a rallying point for advocates for the homeless. The Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS) as well as others have provided support to the campers.

### Analysis:

- The current situation is relatively volatile following the issuance of the letter and political and legal advocates have now taken a positional stance on the issue. Adjacent property owners call public officials on a daily basis to complain of adverse impacts on their property and personal safety. The Victoria Courthouse has sustained operations through this situation.
- While the Province has the right to cause occupants to be removed under the Trespass Act, the approach has been to develop firm housing and social options prior to initiating notification and enforcement action. The first step is a notification flyer to advise campers that the Province wishes them to leave the property and to direct them to housing and social service resources. Subsequent notifications would be escalated with stronger language and with dates attached.  
● s.13
- Police have also previously advised of circumstances where youth under Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) care have been observed on site. This was raised to MCFD on January 7, 2016 and is being monitored.
- The timing of action will need to be carefully considered. Housing options were available for the number of occupants in November, but the numbers have since grown beyond what was provided by the 40 bed transitional home at Yates Street. The notification plan will also take a number of weeks before the population is reduced to those who really are not interested in finding housing but rather wish to make a political statement about



homelessness. The notification plan not only mitigates legal risk to the Province but would also be used to substantiate an injunction request should it be required.

**Attachment(s):** *Previous DN dated 7 Dec 2015*

**Contact:** *Brian Fellows, Assistant Deputy Minister Real Property Division 250-387-8280  
Jon Burbee, Executive Director Asset Management Branch 250-213-7439;*

## 2016 Decision Note Advice to Minister

**Date:** September 23, 2016

**Cliff #:** 105063

**Issue:** Victoria Courthouse Site Renewal

### Recommendation / Next Steps (if any):

- The Province proceeds to design of a play-structure and playing field for the site based on discussions with neighbours and organizations in the area and direction from the Minister.
- The Provinces' interest is to transform the courthouse lawn into a welcoming public space.
- The Province announces the decision to proceed with a play-structure and playing field on the site through the GCPE office.
- The Province can include the following elements (and cost estimates) in its design:
  - Chess/checker tables;
  - s.22
  - 
  - Benches.
- The Province will pursue partnership and volunteer opportunities.

### Background / Facts:

- The Province has been sensitive to the impacts that the courthouse encampment has had on the community while solutions (legal, housing, etc.) were being developed.
- The need to repair and restore the site represents an opportunity to create a new space that reflects the need of the community.
- The focused community discussions supported the plan being presented here.
- Stakeholders engaged in the discussion process included; neighbouring residents; Christ Church Cathedral and School; City of Victoria; City of Victoria Police Department; BC Fire Commissioner and the YM/YWCA. Consultations had already taken place with Court Services Branch, Ministry of Justice.
- Meetings with stakeholders clearly indicated the preference for a medium-sized play-structure designed to focus on children of all ages.

### Analysis:

- A number of options were considered based on input from the immediate neighbours.
- The neighbours are supportive of a play-structure / playfield option.
- The preferred option meets the main criteria previously identified as:
  - Possible benefits and impacts to the surrounding neighbourhood;
  - Maintaining flexibility for further expansion of the Courthouse; and
  - Ensuring any alternate use is supportive of the Courthouse functions.
- There are opportunities for partnerships in the design and development of a play-structure.
- There is an opportunity for a public event to assemble the play-structure.

**Options:****1. Proceed with Children's Playground and Greenspace**

One-time costs: \$200,000 to \$250,000 based on preliminary estimate (within previously identified budget) Ongoing Costs: <\$10,000/year

**Pros:**

- Design and construction can commence immediately with anticipated completion in Feb-Mar 2017.
- Caters to all demographics in the neighbourhood.
- Use is strongly supported by neighbours.
- Converts the courthouse lawn in to a welcoming public space for use by neighbours, visitors to courthouse and staff working in the courthouse.

**Cons:**

- Final cost could be higher if more expensive playground equipment is required.
- Liability of Province for operating a playground

**2. Return with an Alternate Proposal for the Site****Pros:**

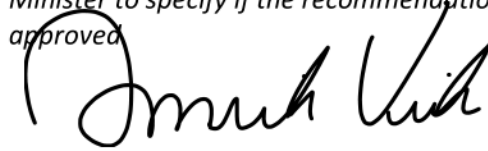
- Opportunity to find a less expensive design alternative.

**Cons:**

- No viable alternate options have been identified that meet the needs of the surrounding neighbours and goals for the site.
- Time delay.

**Approved/Not Approved**

*Minister to specify if the recommendation has been approved or one of the other options or simply not approved*

*Option 1*  


**Amrik Virk, Minister**

*2016-10-05*

**Date**

**Attachment(s):** N/A

**Contact:** Brian Fellows, Assistant Deputy Minister, Michael Blaschuk, Contractor

**From:** Schaap, Samantha LASS:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2016 3:45 PM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Update on Tent City: July 11, 2016  
**Attachments:** 31 Clexit 2017.JPG; 29 Report SIC's successes.JPG; 27 SIC residents react.JPG; 32 Fence erected at SIC.pdf; 03 Both sides of the story.JPG; 21 SIC to be dismantled.JPG; 15 Meddle with justice system.JPG; 30 SIC commuter.JPG; 20 SIC must be shut down.JPG; 10 Make choices for themselves.JPG; 08 Help the working poor.JPG; 16 SIC gets reprieve.pdf; 17 Laws don't apply in SIC.JPG; 07 Citizens as pawns.JPG; 02 More unlawful activity.JPG; 35 Squalid.JPG; 28 More police, less crime @ SIC.pdf; 06 Second attempt.pdf; 05 Work to survive.JPG; 25 Rights threatened.JPG; 01 SIC future uncertain.pdf; 24 Judge orders end to SIC.pdf; 09 Most vulnerable people.JPG; 12 SIC residents start moving out.pdf; 19 SIC must go.pdf; 26 Not the end of the SIC story.pdf; 13 Under order from fire commissioner.pdf; 33 Province puts up fence around SIC.pdf; 34 Low barrier.JPG; 22 SIC court ruling excerpts.pdf; 14 SIC allowed to stay...for now.pdf; 04 A hand-up NOT a hand-out.JPG; 18 Passing the buck.JPG; 11 SIC campers asked to leave.pdf

Tent City email.



Sam Schaap  
Constituency Assistant to  
**Hon. Amrik Virk, MLA**  
Surrey-Tynehead  
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[www.amrikvirkmla.ca](http://www.amrikvirkmla.ca)

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** July 11, 2016 5:07 PM  
**To:** Lisa Helps ; [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca); Coleman.MLA, Rich ; Horgan.MLA, John ; James.MLA, Carole ; [Councillors@victoria.ca](mailto:Councillors@victoria.ca); Virk.MLA, Amrik ; Fleming.MLA, Rob ; Karagianis.MLA, Maurine ; Popham.MLA, Lana  
**Subject:** Update on Tent City: July 11, 2016

To the elected officials of Victoria and the Province of British Columbia.

Having been nearly a week now since the Province was granted an injunction to get the squatters off the courthouse land, I was cautiously optimistic that some signs of progress would be seen at the sight. Instead, a fence has been erected (at further taxpayers' expense) that takes over even more public property and the only official word from a SIC spokesperson is that residents intend to defy the August 8, 2016 date of the encampment's full and final closure. What I demand to know is how do all levels of government intend to enforce the decision of the BC Supreme Court in this matter? Furthermore, what assurances will you give to the hardworking, tax paying citizens of

Victoria that another slum like this will **never** be allowed to get established ever again? The time for words and rhetoric have long passed; the City of Victoria and the Province of British Columbia **MUST resolve this matter now and for the future**. I implore each of you to take the time to read through the various documents I have attached - *representing the people of Victoria* - and tell us when we will see a **permanent** resolution to this crisis.

Lastly, I again remind you none of this will be forgotten at the polls in May 2017 or October 2018. Thank you.

s.22

Increasingly angered Victoria Citizen and Voter

# Future of tent city uncertain as judge considers arguments

SARAH PETRESCU / TIMES COLONIST

JUNE 28, 2016

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# Tent city will encourage more unlawful activity

TIMES COLONIST

JUNE 29, 2016 12:46 AM



Re: "Tent-city battle returns to court," June 28.

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**B.C. makes second bid to evict homeless campers at Victoria courthouse**  
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**Find this article at:**  
<http://www.vicnews.com/news/384571321.html>

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# **20 tent city campers asked to leave on Canada Day over fire risk**

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# **Tent city residents start moving out in advance of fire order deadline**

By: April Lawrence on: June 30, 2016

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# Under order from fire commissioner, Victoria's tent city downsizes

By Justin McElroy Online News Producer Global News July 1, 2016

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# **B.C. Fire Commissioner allows Victoria tent city to stay**

By Maryse Zeidler, [CBC News](#) July 2, 2016

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# Why is a civil court involved with tent city?

TIMES COLONIST  
JULY 3, 2016 12:56 AM



Re: "Tent city fate caught in legal limbo," June 29.

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# **Tent city gets reprieve from fire order as 20 campers move out**

Posted by: Keith Vasson: July 2, 2016

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# Victoria's tent city must go, court rules

SARAH PETRESCU / TIMES COLONIST JULY 5, 2016 03:33 PM

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# Judge rules tent city is "unsafe" and must be shut down

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July 05, 2016 03:43 from Hilary Eastmure

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# Judge orders dismantling of Victoria's tent city

Posted By: Ben O'Hara on: July 05, 2016 In: CHEK, News

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# Excerpts from court ruling ordering tent city to be dismantled

TIMES COLONIST JULY 5, 2016

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# Judge orders end to tent city by August 8

SARAH PETRESCU / TIMES COLONIST JULY 5, 2016

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# Rights, safety of a Canadian are threatened

TIMES COLONIST  
JULY 7, 2016 12:59 AM



Re: "Tent-city neighbours not allowed to speak in court," comment, June 30.

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# Editorial: Tent city ruling not end of story

TIMES COLONIST JULY 7, 2016 12:36 AM

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# Mixed reactions from tent city resident to injunction ruling

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July 06, 2016 11:20 from Hilary Eastmure

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# Police calls from tent city down as more officers posted in area

SARAH PETRESCU / TIMES COLONIST JULY 7, 2016

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# Report successes for tent-city residents

TIMES COLONIST  
JULY 8, 2016 12:05 AM



Re: “Tent city succeeded in showing the way forward,” July 6.

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# Does this tent-city resident commute?

TIMES COLONIST  
JULY 8, 2016 12:05 AM



Re: "Judge orders end to tent city by Aug. 8," July 6.

Copyright

# Lots of cash for industry, little for services

TIMES COLONIST

JULY 8, 2016 12:05 AM



Re: "Tent city succeeded in showing the way forward," July 6.

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# Province erects fences at Victoria's tent city

AMY SMART / TIMES COLONIST JULY 9, 2016

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# Province puts up fence around Victoria's tent city

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s.22

**Coates, Brianna FIN:EX**

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 3, 2016 11:50 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Times Colonist, August 1, KDedyna, "in his ruling"

I received an email and call from s.22 Our Housing Ministry let us know that it is more for your office to respond.

Would you please have someone within your Ministry call him back.

Thank you,

Luella

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Apologies for the second response to this, but I have been informed that this inquiry should be directed to the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services. We don't own the land nor do we have any say in how it is used going forward.

Would you please re-direct to MTIC to have someone get in touch with him to discuss?

Thanks,  
E.

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX [<mailto:MNGH.Minister@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** August-03-16 10:58 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth McNabb  
**Cc:** Sures, Lauren MNGD:EX; Hirji, Keivan MNGD:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Times Colonist, August 1, KDedyna, "in his ruling"

s.22 would like a call back please as he read the TC article and wants to know why this was said apparently by our Minister and why "we" would let it happen again.

He has talked to Dominic Flanagan and Andie Bond and JAG who had no information on this.

s.22

If someone would please call him to discuss.

Kind regards,

**Luella Barnetson**

*Administrative Coordinator to the  
Honourable Rich Coleman  
Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier  
Direct: (250) 387-6701  
Main line: (250) 953-0900*

**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 3, 2016 10:51 AM  
**To:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Subject:** Times Colonist, August 1, KDedyna, "in his ruling"

"In his July ruling, Hinkson said the province had said that following 10 to 12 weeks for remediation of the lawn it would not seek to forbid overnight sheltering by homeless individuals on the courthouse green space."

So the province is perfectly happy having the exact same thing happen again in November!

So glad you are happy perpetuating the destruction of my neighbourhood. So glad you are encouraging the ongoing criminality of this fetid cesspool.

Unacceptable.

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 4, 2016 10:27 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: After Tent City

For your Ministry's review and consideration.

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**From:** Coleman.MLA, Rich [<mailto:Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 4, 2016 9:54 AM  
**To:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Subject:** FW: After Tent City

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** August 3, 2016 6:12 PM  
**To:** Coleman.MLA, Rich <[Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** [mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca)  
**Subject:** After Tent City

Hello Mr. Coleman

For a year now, my Practice, my livelihood and my sanity have been subject to a tent city illegally occupying Provincial Land. You don't need to hear this again, s.22

s.22 with constant filth, drug deals, theft, violence, police and ambulance coming and going, and erratic and unpredictable behavior by the residents of tent city. For the past 3 weeks we have witnessed thousands of dollars being spent trying to dismantle this disaster. Our street parking has been taken up with Hazardous Material trucks, Pest Control, Demolition teams, police, and multiple social agencies. In the early days, public sentiment was relatively supportive, until people finally started to realize the impact it has had on this neighbourhood, and the fact that these "innocent homeless people", in the majority were drug addicts, mentally ill drug addicts and "known to police" with mixed criminal records.

Within the next few days, we will hopefully see the end of this atrocity, which has affected the mental and physical health of a formerly peaceful and safe neighbourhood. However, in disbelief, we are still hearing that you are going to allow overnight parking on this site once it is remediated! First of all, this is not City land, and does not fall into the category of being required to allow overnight parking if no shelter beds are available. Secondly, shelter beds and housing are available. Thirdly, if you allow overnight camping, we will be subject to exactly the same behavior as outlined above. Most of what has been described occurs at night, and overnight camping will subject this neighbourhood to the same abuse it has suffered from for the past year. You will also have the same policing costs, and the land will not be safe for public use because in the morning, you will find it strewn with needles and more.

We are not asking, we are insisting that you and everyone who has control of that land, to forbid overnight camping after the remediation. We would also request the remediation be done in such a way as to deter

this kind of thing ever happening again, and returning the land to public space for all to enjoy. If this land cannot be managed accordingly, it should be sold to a private developer so that this can never happen again.

s.22

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 9, 2016 11:31 AM  
**To:** s.22  
**Cc:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: the courthouse property (Ref 104834)

Hello s.22 and thank you for your email regarding the Victoria courthouse lawn. We appreciate your taking the time to share your suggestions on this issue with us. On your behalf, we are providing a copy of your correspondence to the Minister responsible for the courthouse property, the Honourable Amrik Virk. Please be assured your input will be included in the Minister's related discussions on this issue.

Again, thank you for writing. We do appreciate hearing from you.

cc: Honourable Amrik Virk

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 9, 2016 7:25 AM  
**To:** OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
**Cc:** Popham.MLA, Lana LASS:EX  
**Subject:** the courthouse property

Good morning, Premier

I have no idea what the actual plans are to remediate the courthouse 'lawn', but I have a suggestion which might eliminate future repeats – turn it into an allotment garden. It is forward thinking in that BC must expand its response to climate change and encourage folks to look outside our 'boxes' regarding what is done traditionally. Wish I'd thought of this sooner, and I hope other ideas than more grass are going to take root!

s.22

Saanich

**Coates, Brianna FIN:EX**

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 17, 2016 9:20 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: courthouse lawn suggestion (Ref 104867)

Hello,

Please see below for your ministries review and consideration.

Thank-you

**Lauren Sures**

Administrative Assistant to the  
Honourable Rich Coleman  
Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier  
Telephone: (250) 953-0900

**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** August 12, 2016 9:24 PM  
**To:** Coleman.MLA, Rich <[Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** courthouse lawn suggestion

Hello,

Thank you for going back to court to finally have Tent City removed from the courthouse lawns. Thank you for providing housing for the homeless.

As a parent of a child at Cathedral School, it is my hope that you will extent an olive branch to the neighbourhood and our school community. We have suffered terribly. School enrolment is down 20 percent. This kind of loss is not sustainable. May I be so bold as to offer a few suggestion?

Could the courthouse lawn be donated to the Cathedral School? We have no sports field. This would be a small gesture to compensate us for the hell we have been put through.

Next, please let the Cool Aid contract run its course till March 2017 and then sell the building to a developer. The building needs too much remediation to make it a worthwhile investment for you, a rezoning win is unlikely as city council members have been hammered by residents. I think we can all agree that this has been an unmitigated disaster. Low barrier shelters do no belong next door to an elementary school. It is time for everyone to move on. It was a mistake but not a fatal one. We can still save our school but Mt. Edwards needs to go.

Both of these suggestions will go a long way with voters in the Beacon Hill/Victoria riding. Neighbours and parents are not pleased with Carole James and a great number of people want her gone. Please give us a Liberal candidate in the area so we can vote the NDP out. Not everyone on the Island votes NDP. If you give us a good candidate, you donate the land for a playground or sports field and you close Mt. Edwards and sell the building, I can almost guarantee that people will vote Carole James out.

It is time to show the taxpayers and the law abiding citizens of Victoria that this government cares about us too.

Thank you for your time.

s.22

Cathedral School parent

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** Barnetson, Luella MEM:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 17, 2016 12:49 PM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Meeting requested (Ref 104869)

As discussed with our office.

Kind regards,

### **Luella Barnetson**

*Administrative Coordinator to the  
Honourable Rich Coleman  
Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier  
Direct: (250) 387-6701  
Main line: (250) 953-0900*

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2016 9:44 AM  
**To:** OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
**Subject:** Meeting requested  
**Importance:** High

August 11, 2016

Hello Premier Clark

I am writing on behalf of our neighbourhood to request a meeting with your office. As you are well aware, our neighbourhood (next to Tent City) has been a living hell for over a year because of the Province's decision to allow a homeless encampment to remain since last summer. We are finally breathing a sigh of relief now that the camp is being dismantled, only to hear that the Province is going to allow overnight camping on the site after it has been remediated. We are stunned by this announcement as we can't believe that the Province would subject this neighbourhood to the filth, theft, abuse, noise, pollution, altercations and indecency we have had to put up with for over a year. Overnight camping will expose us to exactly the same experience we have had with the permanent encampment, only there will be no end to it. Most of what this neighbourhood has had to endure has happened at night, so to allow overnight camping will give us no relief at all to what we have been through.

Haven't you learned anything from this experience? You can not "import" drug addicts and drug addicted mentally ill people and impose them on a small residential neighbourhood. The drug use and drug trafficking takes place at night, and in the morning we find the needles, the condoms, and the excrement. You have met all the requirements of the Judge by finding enough homeless beds for these people. You are not under the ruling which requires city land to provide overnight camping if there are not enough homeless beds. What on earth are you thinking? If you cannot keep this land clean, free and safe for the neighbourhood, then sell it to a developer or lease it to the Cathedral School.

And, no, we do not want extra security and extra policing to manage the "overnight camping"! We have had enough of police and security on our street, invading our neighbourhood and taking up all of our parking.

Please write back at your earliest convenience with a meeting time. If you wish, we can hold the meeting in the common room of our condominium.

s.22

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** Virk.MLA, Amrik LASS:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2016 11:15 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Victoria Courthouse lawns

FYI-

Chantal Lee  
Constituency Assistant to  
**Hon. Amrik Virk, MLA**  
Surrey-Tynehead  
201-15135 101 Ave., Surrey, BC V3R 7Z1  
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[www.amrikvirkmla.ca](http://www.amrikvirkmla.ca)

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** August 21, 2016 8:14 PM  
**To:** Virk.MLA, Amrik  
**Subject:** Victoria Courthouse lawns

Hello Mr Virk,

I am writing to you today to say that I hope you follow through with Rich Coleman's excellent suggestion of a playground on the former Tent City site.

As you are well aware the last 8 months have been a living nightmare for the neighbourhood, the Cathedral and the Cathedral School. A playground on the site would be a welcome addition to the neighbourhood and would go a long way to helping the neighbourhood heal.

I understand that the grounds are quite contaminated and once the site has been remediated I would hope that you will reach out to the neighbours, and the Cathedral School so that they might have a say in the future planning for the site.

I have several ideas for the courthouse lawn.

1. Donate the land to the Cathedral School after it has been cleaned up. Enrolment is down almost 20 %. This is due to Tent City and Mt. Edwards. You have the power to change all that. The School doesn't have any large playing surfaces. We could share the land with the Y. We already have several partnerships with the Y and they would love to have access to some outdoor space.
2. By donating the land to the School. You are done with this whole mess. Wouldn't that be wonderful?
3. By donating the land to the school, you don't have to worry about future upkeep of the site and you don't have to worry about campers coming back. It is an election year after all!

4. Another route is to turn the site into a natural playground. Not unlike the Terra Nova park in Richmond.

5. A natural playground is quieter and better suited to a residential/business area.

examples can be found here: <http://www.naturalplaygrounds.ca> and <http://www.naturesinstruments.com>

As a parent of a child at the Cathedral School, I simply can't wait for this nightmare to be over. It is our hope that you will not renew the Cool Aid contract when it expires at the end of March 2017. We have more than established that low barriers shelters and transitional housing do not belong next door to an elementary school.

You can sell the building to a developer who can put in condo units. The building needs too much work to make it a worthwhile investment for you. With the Super 8 motel to open in November and the Central Care Home it makes Mt. Edwards redundant and not a good return on your investment. Sell it for a profit, and make the neighbours, and the school community happy! The election will be here before we know it. Wouldn't it be good PR for you to have this nuisance property off your hands?

Kind regards,

s.22

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2016 3:40 PM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Courthouse Lawn feedback

Please see below for your ministries review and consideration.

Thank-you,

### Lauren Sures

Administrative Assistant to the  
Honourable Rich Coleman  
Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier  
Telephone: (250) 953-0900

---

**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** August 21, 2016 8:38 PM  
**To:** Coleman.MLA, Rich <[Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Courthouse Lawn feedback

Hello Mr Virk,

I am writing to you today to say that I hope you follow through with your excellent suggestion of a playground on the former Tent City site.

As you are well aware the last 8 months have been a living nightmare for the neighbourhood, the Cathedral and the Cathedral School. A playground on the site would be a welcome addition to the neighbourhood and would go a long way to helping the neighbourhood heal.

I understand that the grounds are quite contaminated and once the site has been remediated I would hope that you will reach out to the neighbours, and the Cathedral School so that they might have a say in the future planning for the site.

I have several ideas for the courthouse lawn.

1. Donate the land to the Cathedral School after it has been cleaned up. Enrolment is down almost 20 %. This is due to Tent City and Mt. Edwards. You have the power to change all that. The School doesn't have any large playing surfaces. We could share the land with the Y. We already have several partnerships with the Y and they would love to have access to some outdoor space.

2. By donating the land to the School. You are done with this whole mess. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

3. By donating the land to the school, you don't have to worry about future upkeep of the site and you don't have to worry about campers coming back. It is an election year after all!

4. Another route is to turn the site into a natural playground. Not unlike the Terra Nova park in Richmond.

5. A natural playground is quieter and better suited to a residential/business area.  
examples can be found here: <http://www.naturalplaygrounds.ca> and <http://www.naturesinstruments.com>

As a parent of a child at the Cathedral School, I simply can't wait for this nightmare to be over. It is our hope that you will not renew the Cool Aid contract when it expires at the end of March 2017. We have more than established that low barriers shelters and transitional housing do not belong next door to an elementary school.

You can sell the building to a developer who can put in condo units. The building needs too much work to make it a worthwhile investment for you. With the Super 8 motel to open in November and the Central Care Home it makes Mt. Edwards redundant and not a good return on your investment. Sell it for a profit, and make the neighbours, and the school community happy! The election will be here before we know it. Wouldn't it be good PR for you to have this nuisance property off your hands?

Kind regards,

s.22

**Coates, Brianna FIN:EX**

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**From:** Sures, Lauren MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:20 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Telephone Message from s.22

Hello,

s.22 would like someone to give her call regarding the proposed Children's playground that is being proposed for Tent City location.

Her phone number is s.22

Thank you,

**Lauren Sures**

Administrative Assistant to the  
Honourable Rich Coleman  
Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier  
Telephone: (250) 953-0900

Mr. Chris Coleman, Housing Minister  
B.C. Legislature  
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Mr. Coleman:

MINISTER OF NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT		
REFERRAL NUMBER: _____		
REPLY TO: _____		
DRAFT REPLY <input type="checkbox"/>	INFOFILE <input type="checkbox"/>	REPLY DIRECT <input type="checkbox"/>
August 25, 2016		
RECEIVED AUG 30 2016		
REMARKS: _____		
_____		
_____		

I respectfully ask you to reconsider developing the Courthouse ex-tent city site into a children's playground instead of a garden with pathways and seats. There are plenty of well-equipped children's play areas in Beacon Hill Park and other parks close to town.

Parking at this site on Quadra and Burdett is a problem six days a week—used by the Courthouse and the 'Y'. Also the Cathedral school use their garden for the school children at recess and for sports activities. Quite a lot of noise is sometimes a problem during term time.

I ask you to excuse this hand-written communication; I can't see very well. I did try to request an appointment to talk to yourself or one of your aides, but perhaps you prefer a written communication.

Yours sincerely,

s.22

Ministry of Technology, Innovation  
and Citizens' Services

**RECEIVED**

SEP 09 2016

MO Response 104963 ☐ INFO FILE  
DMO Response

**From:** Geary, Orla MTIC:EX on behalf of MTIC RPD ADMO MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, August 26, 2016 10:22 AM  
**To:** s.22  
**Subject:** The Courthouse Property (Ref 104834)

Dear<sup>s.22</sup>

Thank you for your email dated August 9, 2016 regarding the future of the Victoria Courthouse Lawn. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Honourable Amrik Virk.

As you are most likely aware, as of August 12, 2016, campers no longer reside on the courthouse lawn. The Province and BC Housing made 330 new housing and shelter units available to the homeless in Greater Victoria. The residents of Tent City have chosen to vacate the courthouse lawn, and many are now residing in these newly available housing options.

In terms of the future use of the courthouse property, we are in the process of addressing environmental impacts to the site which need to be addressed. This will include environmental remediation of the site, removing hazardous materials, contaminated soil and performing testing to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the site is restored. During that process we will be exploring potential uses and design for the property to best fit the needs of the community.

I appreciate hearing feedback from community members such as yourself. We will certainly include your suggestion for an allotment garden in our discussions. Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Sincerely,

Brian Fellows  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Real Property Division  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation  
and Citizens' Services

## Coates, Brianna FIN:EX

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**From:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, August 29, 2016 9:36 AM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Tent City

Please see below for your ministries review and consideration.

Thank-you,  
Lauren

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**From:** Coleman.MLA, Rich [mailto:Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 18, 2016 1:02 PM  
**To:** Minister, MNGD MNGD:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Tent City

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**From:** s.22  
**Sent:** August 17, 2016 6:52 PM  
**To:** Coleman.MLA, Rich <Rich.Coleman.MLA@leg.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Tent City

s.22

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** s.22  
**Subject:** Tent City  
**Date:** August 17, 2016 at 6:46:01 PM PDT  
**To:** s.17  
**Cc:** [mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca), [Jon.Burbee@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jon.Burbee@gov.bc.ca), [suzanne.anton@legbc.ca](mailto:suzanne.anton@legbc.ca)

s.22

I am most concerned with what has happened and what will continue to happen should campers be allowed BACK into the property adjoining the court house. s.22 has to put up with the Sandy Merriam House and there clients which attracts there male friends which results in yelling, swearing, garbage, and open drug use plus alcohol on our boulevards and then we had tent city or shanty town as many of us called it for the last year. Why should any of us have to tolerate more abuse by the apparent decision of overnight camping. This seems to set a precedent which could result in more provincial property being overrun by the homeless as the courts will look at what was allowed to happen on Burdett and approve the same elsewhere. The politicians and bureaucrats on all levels

have to understand what we have had to live with and should NOT expect us to live thru further disruption of what we believe is our right to a quiet peaceful and safe environment to live and also respect for the fact we are tax paying people who have lost value in our homes which we worked so hard to achieve. The only logical decision should be returning the property to its former condition for all to enjoy including CHILDREN with safety the top priority and not drug use needles etc. I also must state the very concerning actions of our local government to ourselves and our neighbours re this matter. Thank goodness for elections in the near future.

s.22

**From:** Geary, Orla MTIC:EX on behalf of MTIC RPD ADMO MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2016 11:42 AM  
**To:** s.22  
**Subject:** RE: Courthouse Lawn Suggestion (Ref: 104867 & 104891)

Dear <sup>s.22</sup>

Thank you for your emails dated August 12, 2016 and August 21, 2016 to the Honourable Ministers Coleman and Virk regarding the closure of Tent City and the future of the courthouse lawn. I am pleased to respond on their behalf.

The Province understands and appreciates your concerns regarding the problems which arose from the tent city on the Victoria Courthouse lawn, and your concerns about low barrier housing in the community. We are sympathetic about the impacts the encampment has had on the community, including the Christ Church Cathedral School.

BC Housing has vast experience integrating low-barrier housing into the communities across British Columbia. Moving residents from the courthouse lawn to the Mount Edwards facility was a decision made with careful planning and consideration. BC Housing will continue to take the community's needs into consideration as they manage the facility.

As you mentioned in your email, environmental impacts to the courthouse lawn need to be addressed. The Province will be undertaking environmental remediation of the site, removing hazardous materials, contaminated soil and performing tests to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the site is restored. The courthouse lawn will remain closed until it is again deemed safe for public use. We understand that many members of the community have been impacted by the encampment, including the school, neighbours, businesses and visitors. The Province needs to take the needs of the whole community into account when planning the future of the courthouse lawn. During the remediation process we will be having discussions with impacted neighbours to explore potential uses and design for the property to best fit the needs of the community.

Thank you for your suggestions regarding a natural playground on the site, your innovative idea to donate the courthouse lawn to the school, and your feedback about the Mount Edwards Facility. I appreciate hearing from community members such as yourself.

Sincerely,

Brian Fellows  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Real Property Division  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services

**From:** Geary, Orla MTIC:EX on behalf of MTIC RPD ADMO MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2016 11:34 AM  
**To:** s.22  
**Subject:** RE: Tent City (#104931)

Dear s.22

Thank you for your email dated August 17, 2016, regarding the future of the courthouse lawn.

The Province understands and appreciates your concerns regarding the problems caused by the encampment at the courthouse. We are sympathetic about the impacts Tent City has had on the community, and sought two court injunctions to remove campers from the courthouse lawn as a result.

As of August 12, 2016, campers no longer reside on the courthouse lawn. The Province and BC Housing made 330 new housing and shelter units available to the homeless in Greater Victoria. The residents of Tent City have chosen to vacate the courthouse lawn, and many are now residing in these newly available housing options.

Environmental impacts to the courthouse lawn need to be addressed. The Province is undertaking environmental remediation of the site, removing hazardous materials, contaminated soil and performing tests to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the site is restored. The courthouse lawn will remain closed until it is deemed safe for public use.

During the remediation process, we will be engaging in discussions with neighbours to explore potential uses and design for the property. Our plans will take the needs of the community into account, including neighbours, children, and local businesses.

I appreciate hearing feedback from community members like you. Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Sincerely,

Brian Fellows  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Real Property Division  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services

Page 68 to/à Page 69

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

DUPLICATE

**Coates, Brianna FIN:EX**

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**From:** Neil C. Carfra <ncarfra@carlaw.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 7, 2016 5:33 PM  
**To:** Minister, MTIC MTIC:EX  
**Cc:** Martin, Marlisa (mmartin@LeagueLaw.com)  
**Subject:** Playground to be built on former tent city site in Victoria  
**Attachments:** LT Minister Virk 2016 11 07.pdf

Dear Minister Virk,

Please see my letter to you of today's date, attached.

Regards,

Neil C. Carfra,  
President, Victoria Bar Association  
[www.vicbar.com](http://www.vicbar.com)

**c/o CARFRA LAWTON LLP**  
6th Floor - 395 Waterfront Crescent  
Victoria BC V8T 5K7

(250) 995-4260  
(250) 381-7804 - fax  
[www.carlaw.ca](http://www.carlaw.ca)

Assistant: [hchild@carlaw.ca](mailto:hchild@carlaw.ca)

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail



November 7, 2016

OUR FILE: 200176

DIRECT DIAL: (250) 995-4260

DIRECT EMAIL: ncarfra@carlaw.ca

Honourable Amrik Virk  
Minister of Technology, Innovation & Citizens' Services  
PO Box 9068 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

***Via Email Only***

Dear Minister Virk:

RE: Playground to be built on former tent city site in Victoria

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I write in my capacity as the newly-installed president of the Victoria Bar Association ("VBA") concerning news from your Ministry released last week about the laudable plan to put up a children's playground in the park to the east of the Victoria courthouse where until recently the tent city was. The VBA is interested in possibly sponsoring a piece of playground equipment.

The VBA is a volunteer organization that acts as a liaison between the lawyers of Victoria and other institutions such as the courts, government and the University of Victoria Faculty of Law. It also works closely with the Law Society of British Columbia, the Canadian Bar Association and other legal organizations.

At the VBA's Annual General Meeting last week, a senior member of the bar raised with me the idea of the VBA funding monkey bars in this park-to-be. I liked the idea immediately. Most of our members regularly work within the Victoria courthouse and those of our members within the family bar in particular have occasions when clients and their children must attend court. I think it would be an excellent goal of the VBA to sponsor a piece of playground equipment in this park next door.

Would the Province be interested in discussing this notion with the VBA? Candidly, we have no knowledge about what you intend to build in the park, what a set of monkey bars or other play structure would cost, and we do not have a large savings account to

fund such a purchase. However, we may be able to fundraise by challenging the Victoria legal community to contribute to the cause.

I ask that you please refer this letter and idea to whomever within your Ministry or elsewhere in government it should go and direct that she or he contact me so that we can explore the matter further.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Carfra', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil C. Carfra,  
President, Victoria Bar Association  
[www.vicbar.com](http://www.vicbar.com)

c/o CARFRA LAWTON LLP  
6th Floor - 395 Waterfront Crescent  
Victoria BC V8T 5K7

cc Marlissa Martin, Secretary, Victoria Bar Association

Date:

To: s.22

Dear s.22

Thank you for your email dated August 3, 2016 regarding the future of the Victoria Courthouse Lawn. The Province understands and appreciates your concerns regarding the problems which were caused by the tent city on the Victoria Courthouse lawn. We are sympathetic about the impacts the encampment has had on the community.

As of August 12, 2016, campers no longer reside on the courthouse lawn. The Province and BC Housing made 330 new housing and shelter units available to the homeless in Greater Victoria. The residents of Tent City have chosen to vacate the courthouse lawn, and many are now residing in these newly available housing options.

The trial regarding the constitutional right to sleep in public spaces is scheduled to commence September 7, 2016. The outcome of that trial will inform Provincial policy and how we are best able to manage overnight camping on provincially owned public spaces in the future.

Regardless of the trial's outcome, environmental impacts to the site need to be addressed. The Province will be undertaking environmental remediation of the site, removing hazardous materials, contaminated soil and performing tests to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the site is restored. The courthouse lawn will remain closed to the public until it is again deemed safe for public use. During that process we will be exploring potential uses and design for the property to best fit the needs of the community.

I appreciate hearing feedback from community members such as yourself. Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Sincerely,

Brian Fellows  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Real Property Division  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services