

Date/Time: Mar. 9, 10:30 a.m.

Deadline @ 4 p.m.

Media: Yahoo News

Reporter: Steve Mertl, smertl@shaw.ca, 604-551-8653

Topic: Victoria Courthouse campers

Background: Reporter looking for background information regarding the upcoming court hearing and the implications this may have on other provincially-owned properties.

Questions:

Is Friday's hearing expected to result in a decision that day?

Also, does the arrangement for overnight camping at the site set a precedent for other provincially owned properties that could conceivably be used as camp sites? This could conceivably be the case if the judge uses the Adams and Abbotsford involving municipal public spaces cases as guidance.

Provided to reporter:

- Three days have been set aside for the injunction hearing, Mar. 11, 14 and 15.
- We won't speculate on the possible outcomes of the court hearing.
- Once we have remediated the site, we're proposing to allow overnight camping at the site between the hours of 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., consistent with local park bylaws.
- The extent of cleanup for the land will depend on what is left at the site once everyone has left and the land can be assessed.
- Similar to the signage in place at city-owned properties, the Ministry has installed no camping signs at other provincially-owned locations in the greater Victoria area to clarify that camping is not appropriate at these locations.

Previous Questions and Response provided through Ministry responsible for Housing:

I know that homeless people have a legal right to camp overnight in municipal parks when there are no shelter spaces available, and I am wondering if this case/decision could extend to provincial property?

- The Province wants to return the Victoria courthouse greenspace to its former state so that it's in a safe condition for public use.
- We expect we will need 10-12 weeks to fully repair the courthouse lawn and tidy up the site for safe public use.
- Once the site is remediated, the province is proposing to allow overnight camping at the site between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., consistent with the City of Victoria's local park bylaw.

- In 2008, the B.C. Supreme Court struck down City of Victoria bylaws and allowed camping in city parks between 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. A similar court case in the City of Abbotsford had the same outcome. You should contact the appropriate city for specific details.
- Currently, there are still shelter spaces available to house campers that remain on the courthouse lawn.
- Mt. Edwards is currently being used as a temporary shelter to house campers at tent city. A public consultation process would take place before the facility could offer permanent housing.
- The Province purchased the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home for \$3.65 million. The operating budget for Mt. Edwards is an estimated \$1.29 million for 12 months.
- The operating budget for Choices (the former Youth Custody Centre) is currently being finalized. We have provided a variety of safe, healthier options for tent city residents, including outdoor camping spaces at the Choices facility for people who prefer to be outside and the feedback from people who have moved has been positive.
- Both of these investments build on the more than \$19 million in annual spending by the Province to support affordable housing for over 5,100 low-income households in Victoria. More info on housing investments in Victoria can be found here:
http://www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/fs_Community-Victoria.pdf
- <https://soundcloud.com/bcgov/minister-coleman-mount-edwards-mar-02-2016>

Byers, Lindsay GCPE:EX

From:Byers, Lindsay GCPE:EX
Sent:29 Feb 2016 16:01:01 -0800
To:'Kines, Lindsay (Times-Colonist)'
Cc:Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX;Ash, Christine GCPE:EX;Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX;Platts, Robin GCPE:EX
Subject:RE: Tent City

Lindsay,

Response below.

Lindsay

Date: Feb 29 @ 3:05 PM

Deadline: Feb 29 @4:30 PM

Outlet: Victoria Times Colonist

Reporter: Lindsay Kines, LKines@timescolonist.com

Topic: Reporter is looking for an update on the number of people still at tent city.

Question & Suggested Response:

Ministers Coleman/ Virk said there will be an update at the end of the day regarding the numbers of people still at tent city and how the government will proceed. Can you provide?

We estimate there are approximately 30-40 people still at the courthouse site. It is not clear how many of the remaining people are homeless, as opposed to being there in protest. We did make shelter and housing available to anyone at the campsite who is homeless, and we continue to encourage those that need housing to take up the offer.

The Mount Edwards facility is housing 38 people. There are currently 20 people using the outdoor space we provided at the Choices facility in View Royal and we have another 20 people who will be moving to the indoor area at Choices once some minor renovations are complete.

From: Kines, Lindsay (Times-Colonist) [mailto:LKines@timescolonist.com]

Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 3:05 PM

To: Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX

Cc: Byers, Lindsay GCPE:EX
Subject: Tent City

Ministers Coleman/Virk said there will be an update at the end of the day regarding the numbers of people still at tent city and how the government will proceed. Can you provide? My deadline is 4:30 p.m.

Best,

Lindsay Kines
Reporter
Victoria Times Colonist
250-382-9006
Twitter: @lindsaykines