

NO: **R262**

DATE: **December 19, 2016**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE **December 19, 2016**

FROM: **Manager, Bylaw Enforcement & Licensing Services**

FILE: **4815-01**

SUBJECT: **Recovery Homes Update**

RECOMMENDATION

The Bylaw Enforcement & Licensing Division recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve the implementation of a cap on the number of registered recovery homes in the City of Surrey to 55.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council regarding the implementation of a business licensing requirement for recovery homes within the City of Surrey, as well implementing a cap on the number of registered homes.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Recovery homes are required to be registered with the Province of British Columbia through the Assisted Living Registry (ALR).

The City of Surrey's Business License Bylaw includes a section for recovery homes, and as such, no further action from Council is required to enact this section. A cap of 55 homes will also be implemented through this process until the Province has completed their review; at which time we will reassess our requirements and regulations.

BACKGROUND

Staff have been reviewing the operations of recovery homes within the City of Surrey, which included reviewing the requirements of a business license, as well as a cap on the number of recovery homes in Surrey. The review has led to the recommendations of:

1. Adding a requirement for business licenses;

2. Implementing a cap on the number of registered recovery homes in the City to 55; and
3. Providing operational guidance for all homes licensed under the program.

The cap will be adjusted to accommodate those applications already in stream. A review of bylaws and regulations related to recovery homes was conducted with Legal Services and it was determined that a cap can be implemented and the business licensing requirement for recovery homes can be utilized.

Staff have also engaged with operators on the approved ALR list to further understand some of their concerns. A majority of their concerns are associated to not having clear direction from the City on the requirements to operate a recovery home.

DISCUSSION

There are currently 50 recovery homes in the City of Surrey that are registered with the ALR. In addition, 20 recovery homes have been identified as illegal, non-registered homes. The number of recovery home complaints received is down from 110 in 2015 to 79 year to date for 2016. This signifies a 28% decrease as a result of the enforcement efforts over the past year, as well as the additional applicant screening process the City has been doing in conjunction with the ALR.

Staff have the appropriate legal authority to impose the business license requirements along with the cap, no further council resolution is required.

Staff have also reviewed all internal processes associated with operating a recovery home within the City of Surrey. Currently the requirements and order of steps are:

1. Application to Bylaw Department
 - a. Operator Screening /Property Owner Screening/Property History Check
2. Fire Safety Inspection(s)
3. Building Inspection(s)
4. Application to ALR (in some cases this is done prior to the above).

The current application process is not efficient for staff or operators. The chart attached as Appendix "I", titled "Proposed Recovery Home Application Process" illustrates a streamlined process moving forward.

By implementing a business license requirement and streamlining the application process, we will improve the overall management of recovery homes from a regulatory perspective and the applicant's overall experience. The proposed changes will result in:

- Greater enforcement tools;
- Increase safety for those who reside in recovery homes;
- Streamlined application process – i.e. one point of contact for applicants;
- Improved data and information associated with recovery homes;
- Improved alignment with ALR requirements; and
- Improved coordination between city departments.

With the City of Surrey facing increased challenges related to homelessness, mental health, and fentanyl use, recovery homes are required to help assist those individuals who are dealing with such issues. However, given the challenge in assisting individuals dealing with these issues, the appropriate screening is required. The proposed changes above will streamline and ensure recovery homes are operating in a safe manner and that they are registered with the ALR, which has the jurisdiction to oversee recovery from a health perspective.

In the Speech from the Throne on February 9, 2016, government pledged to “*introduce legislation to modernize community care and assisted living.*” Subsequently, the Ministry of Health advised that our previous work, done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, will be reviewed as they implement new legislation and revise applicable regulations and policies.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Implementing a business license requirement for recovery homes will support the Public Safety theme in the Sustainability Charter 2.0 – **Public Safety and Wellness.**

CONCLUSION

Staff will formally advise the Ministry of Health and the Assisted Living Registry on the requirements of a business license for all recovery homes within the City of Surrey.

Staff will continue to advocate to the Province of BC the importance of regular monitoring of recovery homes to ensure operators are maintaining adequate standards of care for their vulnerable residents, sufficient funding for the Supportive Recovery House (SRH) Per Diem Program and a fair regional distribution of beds.

Staff will also be in contact with all registered homes within the City of Surrey to start the process for a business license.

Finally, staff will prepare a proactive media release outlining the changes in procedures in order to operate a recovery home in the City of Surrey.



Jas Rehal, CPA, CMA
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c.c. City Manager
City Solicitor
RCMP OIC
Fire Chief
Director, Public Safety Strategies

Appendix "I" Proposed Recovery Home Application Process

Proposed Recovery Home Application Process

