

MEDIA RELEASE

"Good sense – good faith" solution suggested for Occupy Vancouver and City of Vancouver

(Vancouver, Nov. 15, 2011) Randy Helten, mayoral candidate for **Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver (NSV)** today offered a "good sense—good faith" solution for both sides to consider Occupy Vancouver (OV) and the City of Vancouver to consider, aware that other cities have been aggressively clearing out Occupy movement sites, and aware that on November 16 the BC courts are to hear the case brought forward by the City of Vancouver seeking an injunction to remove the "tent city" now located at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

"I sincerely hope that the City will not escalate this situation unnecessarily, and will instead show wisdom, good reason and good faith in the handling of this situation. It won't help anyone if the City goes in aggressively and creates a conflict," said Helten, "The current mayor should handle this in a way that will make us proud."

The five suggestions are as follows:

- 1) Encourage the City and Occupy Vancouver to negotiate a reduced but round-the-clock presence at the Art Gallery. This should include food and clothing distribution tents and at least several sleeping tents.
- 2) Encourage the OV participants to commit to a policy of peaceful coexistence and non-interference with other public events, such as celebrations, protests, etc., that have already been planned--or may be planned in the future--for the square.
- 3) Encourage the City to commit to providing reasonable security and assistance as needed, and to convene discussions with the OV participants in regard to use of the site and City policies that could be created or changed to address legitimate issues and problems raised by the OV movement.
- 4) Encourage the City to reopen four low-barrier HEAT shelters as soon as possible, and create additional ones if required. The OV Tent City is a consequence of insufficient shelter space because, despite winter conditions, the low-barrier shelters have not been reopened.
- 5) Encourage the City and Occupy Vancouver to agree upon a site in the downtown area for a temporary Tent City, with appropriate supports and services, to house those who cannot find space in a shelter until adequate (not overcrowded) shelter space is available. Tent Cities are a poor substitute for shelters, which are a very poor substitute for homes. But they are better for health and safety than the alternatives--doorways, garbage bins, remote industrial or park areas, etc.

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