

Riverview Village Intentional Community Society

Notes for presentation to the Riverview Lands Advisory
Committee, City of Coquitlam, October 11, 2016

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Recap of proposal for a Riverview Village intentional community for the benefit of those with a serious mental illness

- Addresses chronic residual “negative” symptoms.
- Mixed population and integrated housing as part of the therapeutic concept.
- Brings the power of community and of acceptance to bear; will provide a true sense of belonging.
- “Engine room” – community animation staff to engage those with an illness and facilitate community development.
- Includes protection of the “arboretum” and creation of a horticultural centre.

The importance of addressing the chronic “negative” symptoms of schizophrenia

- These days, people with a severe mental illness are usually in acute care “for weeks, not months, not years.”
 - Darrell Burnham, executive director, Coast Mental Health, at B.C. Housing’s Fourth Open House on Riverview. Implicit in the remark is that we need to pay much more attention to helping them in the rest of their lives. Dealing with ongoing residual (“negative”) symptoms, especially in cases of schizophrenia, is a major therapeutic need.
- “It may be that the negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including problems with motivation, social interactions, affective experience and responsiveness, prosody and clarity of speech, and slowed movement, contribute more to poor functional outcomes and quality of life for individuals with schizophrenia than do positive symptoms [i.e. delusions, hallucinations, etc.]”
 - Dawn I. Velligan, PhD and Larry D. Alphs PhD, “Negative Symptoms in Schizophrenia: An Update on Identification and Treatment,” *Psychiatric Times*, November 24, 2014.
- The proposed intentional community is a direct expression, in this age of anti-psychotics, of Riverview’s historic legacy of helping the seriously mentally ill.

Working papers

(Available at www.riverviewvillage.ca)

- “Riverview Village: An innovative, ground-breaking community for the Riverview Lands,” July 2014, outlining the proposal itself;
- “Questions and Answers,” March 2015, a multi-part elaboration of different aspects of the proposed village;
- “Making the ‘intentional community’ explicit”: Response to B.C. Housing’s December 2015 “vision” document for renewing the Lands.
- “Intentional communities with therapeutic or developmental objectives,” September 2016, exploring seven existing intentional communities and discussing different aspects in common such as innovation, intentionality, integration with others, importance of group dynamics, meaningful work, and the humanity at the core of such communities

(see over)

Resolutions for consideration

- Resolved that any village on the Riverview Lands be in the form of, and constitute, an intentional community for the benefit of the seriously mentally ill, and that B.C. Housing's planning for the community follow accordingly.
- Resolved that a substantial percentage of the residents in this Riverview village will be those with a diagnosed mental illness and a substantial percentage will be those without a mental illness.
- Resolved that, at least until such a community is well-established, the overall population be limited to the minimum required (a) for a sustainable and vital community with a good quality of life, and (b) to be economically feasible; and that innovative measures be taken for that purpose.
- Resolved that the housing for those with an illness and those without an illness be integrated.