

Meara Conway

MLA for Regina Elphinstone Centre

Opposition Critic for Social Services, Housing, Human Rights, Community-based Organizations

January 7, 2021

Honourable Lori Carr
Room 303 - 2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Minister Carr,

I write in regards to the new warming centre, AWASIW, which was established and is funded by All Nations Hope and the YWCA, with additional funding support from the City of Regina.

I understand that various service providers have been taking people in need of housing and assistance and dropping them off at the centre. Mobile Crisis Services (MCS) has done so on occasion without so much as contacting the centre. This warming centre is an emergency stop gap measure put in place to prevent freezing deaths. It is not equipped to receive referrals from MCS: individuals at the warming centre should be contacting MCS for support and housing, not the other way around. What's more, the Regina Police Services recently dropped off someone contrary to the centre's wishes, which I understand caused a series of issues. It is telling that key service providers across the city cannot look to alternative resources to deal with desperate situations.

I understand the centre's coordinator is working with all groups to solve the issue, but this situation speaks to the crisis of homelessness in Regina and the urgent need for the Province to provide additional resources. As the MLA for the neighbourhood where the warming centre is located, and as critic for Social Services and Housing, I am asking that the provincial government provide funding for the warming centre and do more to support cities and municipalities, as well as community-based organizations working across this sector. Housing initiatives – if approached thoughtfully – are uniquely positioned to meaningfully address addiction, mental health, and poverty, not to mention they can save valuable resources in other sectors. The province received funds from the federal government for vulnerable populations during COVID-19 and presumably has a windfall of previously allocated money from CERB clawbacks. Many local homelessness strategies exist and are simply awaiting provincial support to put their ideas to action. Your Ministry could achieve so much more as a collaborative partner in this very important, lifesaving work.

I hope we can work together to address the crises of housing and poverty across our province. I propose a meeting before the March session to discuss this. Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



NDP MLA, Regina Elphinstone Centre

cc: Andrew Stevens, City Councillor Ward 3
Wanda Rockthunder, Coordinator of AWASIW
Melissa Coomber-Bendtsen, CEO of YWCA
Margaret Kisikaw Piyesis, Finance Director at All Nations Hope Network

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