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KNOX-METROPOLITAN
UNITED CHURCH

June 9, 2022

Attn City Clerk's Office

Re: Letter of Support for Motion MN22-3 – Ending Homelessness

Dear Mayor and Council,

My name is Carol Schick, I am a member and the current Chair of the Board of Directors of Knox-Metropolitan United Church. I am also a volunteer with the weekly Interchurch sandwich lunch held at First Baptist Church across the street from Knox-Met.

In my various roles, I have seen people looking to find safe space to stay and even sleep on the steps of our church building. I have personally sat with people and heard their longing for a safe, supportive place to call home. While I appreciate that some level of sanctuary is found under the shadow of our building – these underserved people have been kind and courteous; they have helped us keep the area clean, even joined volunteers in watering and weeding the garden. I have had delightful conversations with many of these people, yet I lament that these temporary supports are, for too many, the best option they see for themselves in the absence of a more appropriate substantial response.

I believe today that you are considering something that could address this.

The Board of Directors at Knox-Metropolitan United Church is hereby indicating its stand in favour of a Plan made by the Regina City Council to allocate a budget item of \$5.5M/year for housing to support clients experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness.

We are among many faith-based groups who are committed to helping people in poverty, but our on-going help does not begin to ameliorate the growing needs of people who need more support.

We are looking to public officials to work with us, to let us know we are not alone among the many voluntary organizations who recognize that poverty is a long-standing problem that deserves more than intermittent charity.

While the Legislative Assembly of the province has been unwilling to step-up with sufficient supports for people in crisis living situations, we appeal to you to follow a different path. After all, it is the residents of the City of Regina who will alternately observe others in dire straits and/or personally feel the effects of inadequate rental accommodation. While Permanent Supportive Housing at a price of 5.5 million dollars is a lot of money, it is much less than what the city will continue to incur due to on-going unreliable accommodation for under-resourced people.

Music for the Soul | Conversations that Matter | Space for the Spirit | Companions for the Journey



Knox-Metropolitan United Church is an Affirming Ministry Located on Treaty 4 Territory, the lands of the nêhiyawak (Cree), Anihsinâpêk, (Anishinaabe) Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda and the homeland of the Métis/Michif Nation.

You are well poised to be able to enact this plan and I urge you not to quibble over whether this is a municipal or provincial issue in the absence of provincial leadership. You have a vital opportunity – and after all, the cost of not responding proactively is already heavily felt by your taxpayer base.

According to the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry—an organization with 50 years experience in this field—the effects of inadequate housing among people in poverty will cost ten-times as much to compensate compared to the relatively small proposal of 5.5 million dollars for Permanent Support Housing. The cost of this initiative in the Draft Budget is relatively small compared to the cost of inaction.

I believe that the outcome of this motion is a concrete and substantial way to embody the Council's commitment to reconciliation and equality.

Faith groups like ours, along with our many adherents, would welcome positive action to support the housing initiative that will make inroads on this real and urgent need. Our faith compels us to serve others, particularly those suffering amidst social and economic injustices. We will continue handing out water bottles and having compassionate conversations with those who seek shelter on our steps; we will continue working with other churches to fill bagged lunches to give away; and while we will continue to support community fridges and community-based organizations, we cannot make the scope of impactful action that is now available to you by passing this motion. Please make the most of this opportunity.

We urge you all to support the Motion on Ending Homelessness.

Blessings,



Dr. Carol Schick PhD | Chair of the Board



Cameron Fraser | Minister