



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2019 #19-04

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## **BC Supreme Court Grants Injunction to Address Safety Issues at St. Anne Camp**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** On Friday, February 8 the BC Supreme Court granted an injunction that will allow the City of Maple Ridge to address safety issues in the camp located on 223 Street west of St. Anne Avenue.

During the court hearing for the injunction application, which was heard on January 14 and 15, the City asked the Court to grant a number of orders intended to address long-standing fire and life-safety issues which had been identified by both the Maple Ridge Fire Department and, more recently, the Provincial Fire Commissioner.

The court order grants the City the authority to address the closeness of tents to the fences and each other, remove accelerants, electrical connections and other materials that pose a fire safety risk on the site. The injunction also grants the City the ability to identify those who are living in the camp to determine who needs housing and any additional support services. This will also assist City staff in identifying and removing any unoccupied tents or unclaimed materials from the site. The injunction order also provides guidance on the RCMP's role in ensuring that the court order can be carried out without obstruction. The court did not grant the City's request to have wooden structures dismantled and removed. Without condoning their construction on City land, the Court has declined to grant that order at this time.

"We are thankful that no one has died as a result of the multiple fires in the camp. It greatly concerns me that the Court did not specifically grant the City the authority to remove the wooden structures, we are grateful that we have been given the authority to address the other serious fire safety issues that are putting the camp occupants and neighbourhood at risk," said Mayor Morden.

"City staff will be working closely with the Bylaws Department, Maple Ridge Fire Department, Ridge Meadows RCMP, BC Housing and representatives of the camp occupants to develop and

implement a coordinated action plan to meet the terms of the BC Supreme Court judgment,” added Mayor Morden. “I would like to thank citizens for their patience as we have followed the legal processes required to address safety in and around the site.”

“As I have said before, this is step one and there is much more work to do. The ability to identify those living in the camp is a critical step in connecting camp occupants with the services they need. Council is resolved to work with the Province and local service providers towards the camp coming to an end,” said Mayor Morden.

The next immediate steps for the City will involve coordinating the implementation of the Court Order and ensuring that terms are maintained within the encampment going forward.