

NOTICE OF MOTION**Extreme Heat Alerts****Moved by: Councillor Silva****Seconded by: Councillor Mihevc**

“**WHEREAS** Toronto experienced a heat wave beginning on July 14 yet the City did not issue a Heat Alert or an Extreme Heat Alert until July 16; this undoubtedly caused great hardship for people who are known to be vulnerable to the heat, for example the elderly, people living in substandard housing and people with disabilities who may not have access to air-conditioned space; and

WHEREAS in the 2005 heat wave in Toronto, there were six reported heat-related deaths of individuals who lived in rooming and boarding homes; and

WHEREAS extreme heat is expected to revisit Toronto in the days to come - Environment Canada predicts temperatures as high as 32 C within days and past experience tells us that a Heat Alert or Extreme Heat Alert may not be called, and even if it is, it may not provide adequate City-wide cooling sites or outreach to seniors; and

WHEREAS it is widely recognized that the most critical measures to reduce heat related deaths are early warning systems, the immediate opening of neighbourhood based cooling centres, outreach to vulnerable populations and energy assistance programs; and

WHEREAS past experience, specifically the 700 deaths in the 1995 Chicago heat wave, has led many American cities to develop innovative public health responses to a heat emergency, for example during the heat wave days from July 14 to 21, 2006:

- Chicago opened 100 cooling centres including senior-citizen centres, district police stations, libraries and park facilities. The City operates a ‘311’ line with up-to-date and accurate information on heat resources and coordinates transportation to cooling centres. In addition, Chicago deploys air-conditioned buses to points around the city to pick up vulnerable people and transport them to cooling centres. The City’s plan also includes ‘reverse 911’ calls which are automated calls to seniors and disabled people known to be at risk;
- New York City opened special cooling centres including over 300 buildings for the public and sent officials on outreach to rescue the homeless and elderly;
- Boston extended hours of air conditioned sites in city community centres, and operates a Mayor’s 24-hour hotline, free access for seniors to a shuttle bus to and from cooling centres;

- the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging set up a telephone ‘heat-line’ with nurses available to answer questions. The Philadelphia Health Department also sent outreach workers to check on the homeless and elderly;
- Kansas City, Missouri - a non-profit organization helps to install air conditioners in the home of indigent elderly. In 2005 more than 600 new fans and 50 air conditioners were donated in a program co-ordinated by Channel 9 in partnership with a local hardware store and the Salvation Army;
- St. Louis, Missouri - Project Elder Cool helps provide and install air conditioners to those in need. The program also provides \$50.00 towards electricity bills for seniors or people with respiratory problems. The City opened 60 cooling centres. The City Health Director cautioned that the city’s older housing, much of it made of red brick, heats up like a furnace and tenants should be cautious. After a power outage that left 300,000 homes and businesses without power, National Guard troops, police, firefighters and volunteers knocked on doors offering bottled water and cookies as they checked on elderly residents and provided transportation to cooling centres. With the added emergency of a power outage, the American Red Cross set up shelter for hundreds;
- Louisville, Kentucky - the city runs a fan and air conditioning program and provides free fans or air conditioners to those in immediate need. White flags also fly at Louisville’s six homeless shelters - white flags are the signal that the air conditioning is on and there’s a place to go to escape the heat. Meals on Wheels personnel were asked by the City to check on recipients to make sure they were not in distress;
- Omaha, Nebraska - the housing authority spent \$25,000.00 to install window air conditioners in apartments used by elderly and disabled residents;
- Baltimore, Maryland has developed a two-pronged heat strategy which includes a code red heat alert plan and an energy assistance initiative. The City opened 11 cooling centres and employs a Maryland transit bus to places where people are at risk. The city ensures that fans, air conditioners and water are provided to those in need. The city has developed a data base of 56,000 seniors and shut-ins and ensures they are visited or checked on. Numerous city agencies co-ordinate their heat response with the Mayor’s Office of Neighbourhoods. On July 20, one day after the Code Red was cancelled Mayor Martin O’Malley reminded residents to remain wary of the heat that still continued and urged people to call ‘311’ if necessary;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct the Medical Officer of Health to modify the formula used to call an Extreme Heat Alert and immediately plan for expansion of neighbourhood based cooling centres, including Scarborough;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City develop measures to create energy assistance programs, such as Project Elder Cool, where fans and air conditioners can be provided to people who meet the medical criteria for need;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City work with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to do same as above;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City immediately examine Toronto's Property Standards by-law that still dictates that in dwellings such as rooming houses, doors must remain shut and windows must be fixed with a safety device preventing the window from opening more than 100 millimetres;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the necessary provisions of Chapter 27 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code be waived to permit introduction and debate of this Notice of Motion at the meeting of Council on July 25, 2006."

July 25, 2006

According to Chapter 27 of the Municipal Code, the foregoing Notice of Motion:

Notice was previously given	
Meets Municipal Code provisions and only requires a simple majority to introduce and debate	
Requires two-thirds to waive notice	(√)
Requires two-thirds to re-open	
Fiscal Impact Statement provided	*
Should have Fiscal Impact Statement prior to debate	*
Requires two-thirds to waive requirement if Council wishes to debate	
Should be referred to the Board of Health	(√)
Requires two-thirds to waive referral if Council wishes to debate	
Recommendations are time sensitive	

* Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to advise.