

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Seconded by: Councillor Paul Ainslie

The Mayor and Members of Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of John Doe, age 30 on January 3, 2019; Crystal Papineau, age 35 on January 8, 2019; Tabitha Lewis, age 30 on January 9, 2019; Hang Vo, age 58 on January 15, 2019; and John Doe, age 45 on January 25, 2019. The John Does are not yet named as their identities have not yet been confirmed. While the public has come to know the five individuals by the context of their passing, each was loved and known within their own communities. Crystal Papineau, Tabitha Lewis, Hang Vo, and the two John Does represent the first five known deaths of local residents due to homelessness in 2019.

Diverse and often highly personal conditions contribute to people seeking respite on our streets, in our parks, and in makeshift shelters throughout our city. All of them, however, hope for more than these five have been left with. Responsibility for the loss of these four lives, and all those who have come before them, rests with each level of government and their respective histories of underinvestment in the health, harm reduction, supportive services and affordable housing that could have otherwise kept them safe and housed.

Toronto Public Health recorded 145 deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 and approximately 16,000 unique residents living with serious, persistent mental health challenges remain on supportive housing wait lists for as long as four years or more. Toronto's Access to Housing Centralized Waiting List has a waitlist of 181,000 individuals hoping for the opportunity to find somewhere affordable that they can stay and call home. These numbers speak to the urgent and complex challenges, including the affordable housing crisis, facing thousands of Torontonians. They offer the best insight into how many residents find themselves vulnerable, street-involved, or dead in one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

The City Clerk is asked to convey, on behalf of Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to families of each of the five.

January 30, 2019