

Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters

Corner of Abbott and Hastings St. Vancouver BC

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The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters formed to fight for social housing as a solution to the housing crisis in Vancouver and all across British Columbia. When the Liberals froze social housing spending in March of 2002 they made a bad situation worse for poor people all across the province. Homelessness, wretched living conditions and ridiculously high rental fees have made life dangerously unstable and difficult for many people in BC.

The Coalition opened the long empty Woodward's Building on Saturday September 14th to challenge and expose the government's negligence in addressing the needs of the poor and to directly meet the needs of the homeless in the city's core. The Coalition drafted a list of demands to define the movement for housing unfolding against the Campbell Government.

1. Develop Woodward's as social housing immediately.
 - a. There must be an allotment of housing in the building for aboriginal people equal to or greater than the percentage of aboriginal people in the Downtown Eastside.
2. Reverse the cuts to social housing and all social services.
3. Draft a civic anti-vacancy by-law to seize and convert empty, abandoned buildings into social housing.
4. Full disclosure of all information regarding the proposed sale and development of the building.
5. The Federal government must fund and support the development of aboriginal business in the proposed commercial storefronts on the ground floor of Woodward's. Develop an urban native self-governing office in the building with drop-in / support services and culturally sensitive native liaison workers from the community.
6. Decent and dignified immediate shelter for all homeless squatters forced from Woodward's and asked to leave the sidewalk in front of the building.

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The Coalition of Woodward's Squatters and Supporters strives to further the demands however possible always in a non-violent way. The Coalition targets the government and business to pressure them to meet the needs of poor and working people in the province, as stated in the demands. The Coalition creates educational material and strives to use and create statistics to expose the anti-poor, pro-business nature of the Liberal governments policies and to create informed social pressure for positive legislative reforms. We defend ourselves from attacks by the government and business community through positive, constructive initiatives (like opening empty buildings as homes and sustaining tent-cities) as well as through direct actions and mass mobilizations of people to disrupt and agitate the existing situation that kills people. We seek to fight alongside the diverse groups of people who have stepped forward to support the Woodward's Squat. The Coalition believes that the only way to change this desperate situation for the better is to stand together and fight alongside each other.

The Coalition is open to anyone who agrees with these basic points.

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