



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

PRESENT: **VOTING**

Councillor Kelly Fehr
Councillor Kari Gares
Jake Russell, Community at Large representative
Annette Sharkey, Social Planning Council
Lianne Longdo, Community at Large representative
Russ Balance, Interior Health Authority (4:17)
Nanette Drobot, BC Housing
Glory Westwell, Habitat for Humanity
Brad Stinn, Building representative

NON-VOTING

Councillor Paul Britton, City of Armstrong

ABSENT: Charles Wills, Seniors Representative

GUESTS: Celine Maboules, Health Sciences Association of B.C.
Matt Thomson, Urban Matters
Jane Lister, Economic Development Advisory Committee

STAFF: Roy Nuriel, Economic Planner/Staff Liaison
Janice Nicol, Legislative Committee Clerk

ORDER The Committee Clerk called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS Roundtable introductions were held.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR Moved by Annette Sharkey; seconded by Councillor Gares;

THAT Councillor Fehr be elected Chair of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee for 2019.

CARRIED.

Moved by Councillor Fehr; seconded by Glory Westwell;

THAT Councillor Gares be elected Vice-Chair of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee for 2019.

CARRIED.

**ADOPTION OF
AGENDA**

Moved by Jake Russell, seconded by Glory Westwell:

THAT the agenda for Thursday, February 14, 2019 for the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

**ADOPTION OF
MINUTES**

Moved by Annette Sharkey, seconded by Councillor Gares:

THAT the minutes of the June 28, 2018 Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

**PROPOSED
SCHEDULE FOR
2019**

- There will be a number of issues coming forward and the Committee should be making quarterly presentations to Council.
- A meeting schedule of once every month on the second Thursday was proposed until April 2019.

**REVIEW OF
COMMITTEE'S
OBJECTIVES,
SCOPE AND
MEMBERSHIP**

The Terms of Reference for the Committee were distributed at the meeting and the following points were reviewed:

- Objectives – quarterly reports to Council
- Data collection – Social Planning Council currently keeps stats on vacancy rates, homeless counts, average rental rates, non-profit units, shelter spaces, income levels. This information will be consolidated and sent out to the Committee.
- Parallels between homelessness and vacancy rates
- Monitoring implementation of housing strategy – the past processes of the Committee was to review affordable housing projects and make recommendations to Council
- Housing assessment needs to be updated.
- There was a proposal to update the existing attainable housing strategy – the new strategy will form workflow for Committee.
- The Committee will be reviewing the issue of short-term rentals in 2019 and providing recommendations to Council.
- Council will also request input from the Committee on secondary suites, the current barriers, etc.

**PRESENTATION –
URBAN MATTERS –
DRAFT HOUSING
STRATEGY**

Matt Thomson from Urban Matters provided an update to the Attainable Housing Strategy for the City of Vernon and gave an overview as follows:

- Process was started in June, the summer was spent doing data collection
- There was extensive stakeholders input – business owners, developers, credit unions, etc.
- Need to answer: ‘What needs to happen and how can it build on existing strategies?’
- Best practices were developed and an event was held to vet the first draft. Vital community conversations were held and were well-attended.
- By taking feedback and integrating strategies, challenges were addressed
- The strategies are designed to support and overlap one another
- The Committee is requested to determine in the key points have been captured?
- Questions are encouraged, any additional feedback can be forwarded to Annette Sharkey.
- Input will be finalized to come back in March.

Attainable Housing Strategies

- There are three Strategies that are based on clear evidence and data driven and take advantage of emerging provincial funding available in March
- Implementing the Strategies will require land economics to determine sweet spot, need to be actioned by City Staff with partnerships with the development community

Investing

- Develop some way to acquire land to leverage affordable housing projects
- Look at creating inclusionary zoning – cash contributions by developer to put toward land acquisition strategy
- Explore financial tools to invest in housing – granting opportunities for non-profits, creating an affordable housing reserve
- Develop educational and outreach tools
- **Dec 5 feedback** – be clear with definitions, targets and baseline info to measure progress
- Communication is key – increase public understanding and guidelines

Regulating and Incentivizing

- Need a comprehensive housing assessment of demand and supply as there will be three years of funding (up to 5M for the next three years)
- Regulate short term rentals
- Refine current DCC rebate model to match level of incentive – sliding scale to match affordability rather than a grant program – levels the playing field and everyone know where they are at – a 20 year agreement, if developer wants out early, must pay back
- Reduced parking requirements for non-profit housing – need to be close to transit exchange
- Consider allowing lock-off units
- Incentives to install and rent secondary suites
- Purpose built rentals in areas west of downtown
- Review housing agreement requirements on projects that receive incentives
- Formalize fast-tracking for approvals for affordable housing projects
- **Dec 5 feedback** – Need to increase housing supply
- Protect existing stock and implement incentives
- Importance of base line info, targets and tracking mechanisms
- Identify opportunities for landlords (education/info)
- Need to increase provincial and federal funding

Communication and Outreach by the City

- Promote revitalization tax exemption program
- Build awareness of the need and benefits of affordable housing projects
- Develop more education and outreach tools and other funding opportunities that are available
- Continue to foster partnerships across sectors – strengthening those current partnerships
- **Dec. 5 Feedback** – Importance of promoting strategies
- Increasing awareness and understanding
- Clear definitions

Committee feedback:

- Concern about cash-in-lieu over rebate – principle is smaller units get cash-in-lieu, develop a policy to target appropriate developments – focus on units in downtown area and reserve cash-in-lieu in suburban areas
- Small up-front cash-in-lieu can assist non-profit with seed funding and can be customized to suit community needs
- Inclusionary zoning is a new concept

- Lock-off units typically in multi-family units – serves both young families and seniors, although important to comply with fire regulations

Celine Maboules from the Health Sciences Authority provided a presentation on Homelessness Strategies. The following points were noted:

There are three key factors that determine the success of proposed actions:

- Focus on coordination and commitment with key stakeholders
- Homeless Individuals and Families Information Systems (HIFIS) – centralized data collection and coordinated access
- Systems based approach
- **Systems Approach and Housing First:**
- Need to complete an overview of systems planning based model and show how can it work in Vernon
- Engage housing providers – ensure access to housing using scattered site mode
- Coordinated health and housing model working with Interior Health
- **Dec. 5 Feedback**
- need more housing with a variety of options
- City needs to lead change
- Importance of prevention/early intervention and coordination
- needs to be home rather just a roof
- Needs to be integration into community and an increase in public awareness/understanding
- **Service Gaps:**
- Need to introduce a shower program – allow access to showers and other resources
- Need public toilets in downtown core
- Explore providing storage space or bins
- Mapping to understand current resources, etc.
- Develop supports for youth and seniors
- Work toward Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous organizations
- **Dec. 5 Feedback**
- Don't reinvent wheel – there are many good programs in place
- Reference strategy CAT/HART team is developing to address opioid crisis
- Identify and list existing services to identify gaps
- Build partnerships to expand services

- Ensure diverse needs are being met.
- **Public Education**
- Provide opportunities through awareness campaigns for the public to better understand homelessness
- Development a process for key messages - social media, etc.
- Increase support for affordable housing and homelessness services
- **Dec. 5 Feedback** – Identify local champions, have consistent messaging with those who have lived experience, partner with local agencies and community events to increase awareness.

Committee feedback:

- Need to look at best practices for safety and security – both business and personal and how other communities deal with homelessness
- There are a great deal of campaigns suggested in the BC Housing Toolkit that centre on building support for local projects
- Must be a 'Made in Vernon' solution
- Investigate model being used in Kelowna - Homeless Prevention Program, has been very effective to date and involves partnering with a non-profit.
- Services placements need to strategic and not centralized.

BC Housing requires leadership from Council to make hard decisions.

It is expected that the draft will be to City Council by the end of February.

INFORMATION ITEMS:


1. July 26, 2018 Letter to Ellen Meyer, Housing Manager, CMHA
2. City of Vernon's Attainable Housing Strategy – December 2007

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

NEXT MEETING The next meeting will be Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 4 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:


_____ Chair