

ST. JOHN'S

Minutes of Committee of the Whole - City Council

Council Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall

December 1, 2021, 9:30 a.m.

Present:	Mayor Danny Breen Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O'Leary Councillor Maggie Burton Councillor Ron Ellsworth Councillor Sandy Hickman Councillor Debbie Hanlon Councillor Jill Bruce Councillor Ophelia Ravencroft Councillor Jamie Korab Councillor Ian Froude Councillor Carl Ridgeley
Staff:	Kevin Breen, City Manager Derek Coffey, Deputy City Manager of Finance & Administration Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager of Community Services Jason Sinyard, Deputy City Manager of Planning, Engineering & Regulatory Services Susan Bonnell, Manager - Communications & Office Services Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner Karen Chafe, City Clerk Jennifer Squires, Legislative Assistant
Others	Linda Bishop, Senior Legal Counsel Judy Tobin, Manager, Housing Krista Gladney, Affordable Housing & Development Facilitator

1. Call to Order

As the Mayor was absent at the start of the meeting, Deputy Mayor O'Leary called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Recommendation

Moved By Councillor Ravencroft

Seconded By Councillor Hickman

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

3. Adoption of the Minutes

3.1 Adoption of Minutes - November 17, 2021

Recommendation

Moved By Councillor Hanlon

Seconded By Councillor Bruce

That the minutes of November 17, 2021, be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4. Presentations/Delegations

5. Finance & Administration - Councillor Ron Ellsworth

6. Public Works - Councillor Sandy Hickman

7. Community Services - Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O'Leary

8. Special Events - Councillor Debbie Hanlon

9. Housing - Councillor Ophelia Ravencroft

9.1 Affordable Housing Strategy Annual Update

Councillor Ravencroft presented an overview of the City of St. John's Affordable Housing Strategy Annual Update report, highlighting the engagement process for parcels of City land, Rapid Housing Initiative funding, the work being done concerning landlord and tenant rights, CMHC SEED Preservation Stream funding, and Indigenous Culture

Diversity Training presented in partnership with End Homelessness St. John's and First Light.

In the report, it was noted that the City partnered with Connections for Seniors on a pilot project to convert four vacant City-owned Lower-end-of-market housing units into 12 supported housing beds for Seniors. Councillor Froude asked if the beds were currently in use, and Staff replied that the beds were fully occupied.

9.2 WWH – City-Owned Vacant Land Identified for Potential Redevelopment as Affordable Housing

Councillor Ravencroft informed Council on feedback received during the engagement process completed on four plots of City owned land identified as potential locations for affordable housing. The parcels of land were 245 Forest Road, 80-90 Empire Avenue, 375 Waterford Bridge Road, and 28 Eric Street, and the What We Heard document summarizes this feedback.

At this point in the meeting, the Mayor entered the Council Chambers and assumed the role of Chair.

Councillor Burton stated that she had concerns surrounding the preliminary engagement process, and asked Staff for their point of view. Housing Staff responded that while there was some confusion with undertaking engagement without a development proposal, overall, they appreciated the engagement and found it to be beneficial to collect ideas from stakeholders, both positive and negative. Councillor Burton remarked that the engagement processes galvanized opposition to any project, with community groups coming together to oppose development on the sites. Instead of dissolving the fears associated with affordable housing, this intensified negativity surrounding the projects. Councillor Burton suggested that going forward some sketches or ideas of what could be developed in these areas, such as community gardens and building designs, may be a way of combatting resistance to affordable housing development.

The Mayor noted that there is a lot of misunderstanding when it comes to affordable housing and felt as though the engagement process allowed the City to better explain the concept of affordable housing and what it could mean to the public. It was beneficial to have a high-level introduction to the concept before adding the details, and it allowed concerns to be expressed and questions to be answered. The Mayor also advised that more preliminary work seems to be required upfront for affordable housing

projects to qualify for funding, and that institutions providing funding are looking for shovel-ready projects.

Both Councillor Korab and Councillor Ridgeley stated that due to the concerns of the constituents of Ward 3 and Ward 5, they would not be supporting the redevelopment of land at 375 Waterford Bridge Road. Councillor Korab suggested that as the Provincial Government had several sites that could be redeveloped for affordable housing they should be involved in the conversation. Councillor Hickman observed that transportation and planning must also be taken into consideration when looking at land for affordable housing. Councillor Ellsworth believed that in dealing with issues of engagement, the public perception was that the decisions had already been made, and that the City was just "dotting the i's" during the engagement process. The City should engage about the land in a generalized way, rather than having a predetermined mind set. Councillor Burton noted that people are reluctant to support the development of green space, and that often the reutilization of existing, vacant, space is suggested, which is costly and at times unfeasible. There needs to be a way to get a "Yes" from the public on these projects and the engagement process may require additional evaluation.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor discussed the benefits of public engagement, noting that some great ideas have come out of the process and that the feedback helps to shape our communities. Council must take information from the public into account when making decisions, and engagement provides some of the best information. Having diversity in our neighbourhoods is enriching and further education may be required when it comes to the benefits of affordable housing. While acknowledging the work being done by Staff, the Deputy Mayor agreed that the current process may need reevaluation and suggested that Engagement Staff undertake a review to determine if there are improvements to be made.

10. Economic Development, Tourism & Immigration - Mayor Danny Breen

11. Arts & Culture - Councillor Debbie Hanlon

12. Governance & Strategic Priorities - Mayor Danny Breen

12.1 Proposed Renaming of Entrance to St. Pats Ballpark

Councillor Burton inquired about the process for renaming. The Mayor replied that a request would be sent to the City Clerk and then reviewed by various City Departments to determine appropriateness. Community feedback may also be required for renaming. The City Manager further

explained that the request would go to the City's Nomenclature Committee for review to avoid redundancy and ensure there were no concerns for emergency responders. Councillor Korab asked if the current request had been reviewed by the Nomenclature Committee, and if by naming the entrance the City would be taking on any additional responsibility for the entrance. The Mayor confirmed that the name had been reviewed and that it would not affect snow clearing or maintenance of the entrance.

Recommendation

Moved By Deputy Mayor O'Leary

Seconded By Councillor Hickman

That Council approve the request from St. John's Amateur Baseball to name the road entrance to St. Pat's Ballpark as "Gordon Breen Way".

MOTION CARRIED

13. Planning - Councillor Ian Froude

13.1 Built Heritage Experts Panel Report - November 17, 2021

1. 27 New Gower Street, Exterior Renovations and Extension

Councillor Hickman asked for clarification as to what was being recommended in the motion. The Chief Municipal Planner responded that the recommendation was to approve the renovations as proposed subject to the pergola being painted steel with wood as a secondary material, the black tile being natural black granite stone tile, and that screening be required for rooftop structures. Once the drawings are reviewed by Staff verifying the recommendations have been implemented, the development may not require additional approval to proceed.

Recommendation

Moved By Councillor Burton

Seconded By Councillor Ravencroft

That Council approve the proposed renovations and extension at 27 New Gower Street, as proposed on the drawings dated November 15, 2021, subject to the following:

- pergola being painted steel with wood as a secondary material;

- black tile being natural black granite stone tile; and
- requiring screening for any HVAC rooftop equipment.

MOTION CARRIED

2. 265 LeMarchant Road, Heritage Designation

Councillor Burton advised that there are many modern buildings in the City that are worthy of heritage designation, including City Hall, and that the property in question was listed as a modern building that would be appropriate for consideration for designation by the Built Heritage Experts Panel. The Deputy Mayor asked for clarification on the progress of the RFP, and if additional bids could be submitted. The City Manager informed Council that the RFP had been awarded and the developer was working with Staff on the development application. There is an issue with space for snow clearing and a request for additional land is being pursued with the Province. Councillor Burton asked if the finalization of the sale was dependent on the settlement of the land issue with the Province. Senior Legal Counsel responded that once the land is obtained by the City, the City will then put the title into the hands of the developer. The designation will permit the developer to submit a plan for adaptive reuse and design, and once reviewed and approved by the City, the land will then be conveyed as outlined in the RFP process.

Recommendation

Moved By Councillor Burton

Seconded By Deputy Mayor O'Leary

That Council approve the heritage designation of 265 LeMarchant Road and direct the Legal Department to amend Schedule C (Heritage Buildings) of the Heritage By-Law for Council's consideration.

MOTION CARRIED

14. Development - Councillor Jamie Korab

15. **Transportation and Regulatory Services - Councillor Maggie Burton**

16. **Sustainability - Councillor Maggie Burton & Councillor Ian Froude**

16.1 **Stewardship Association of Municipalities – Spring AGM**

17. **Other Business**

17.1 **Youth Engagement Strategy Update**

Recommendation

Moved By Councillor Burton

Seconded By Councillor Bruce

That Council approve the creation of the Youth Engagement Working Group and direct staff to undertake the recruitment process.

MOTION CARRIED

18. **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Mayor