

# **ST. JOHN'S**

## **Affordable Housing Working Group Minutes**

**September 24, 2019**

**12:00 p.m.**

**Conference Room A, 4th Floor City Hall**

**Present:** Jill Snow, CMHC  
Gail Thornhill, Stella's Circle  
Hope Jamieson, Council Representative  
Doug Pawson, End Homelessness St. John's  
Grayson Kelly, NLHC  
Emily Timmons, Poverty Reduction, Gov NL  
Andrew Harvey, First Light

**Regrets:** Ayon Shahed, Choices for Youth  
Victoria Belbin, Canadian Homebuilders Association

**Staff:** Simone Lilly, Affordable Housing & Development Facilitator,  
Chair  
Judy Tobin, Manager of Non-Profit Housing  
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

**Others:** Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O'Leary

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

### **2.1 Agenda of September 24, 2019**

**Recommendation**

**Moved By** Andrew Harvey

**Seconded By** Doug Pawson

That the agenda be adopted as presented

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**3.1 Minutes of Affordable Housing Working Group for June 26, 2019**

**Recommendation**

**Moved By** Andrew Harvey

**Seconded By** Emily Timmons

That the minutes of the Affordable Housing Working Group held on June 26, 2019 be adopted as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**4.1 Information note dated September 17, 2019 re: Affordable Housing Update**

The Chair updated the Committee on the following ongoing initiatives, the details of which are outlined in the above cited Information Note included within the agenda:

- Housing Needs Study Update:
  - A presentation will be held October 4, 2019 on Housing Need in St. John's and new research and practices to respond to housing trends. David Harrison will present on the data as well as his findings and analysis associated with his oversight of the City of St. John's Housing Needs Assessment Report.
  - A request was made for the Committee to invite their contacts to register for the event.
- Land Inventory:
  - A new list is being circulated to relevant internal departments for comment in order to add additional parcels to our inventory list.
  - Andrew Harvey/Jill Snow declared conflict of interest and inability to vote on Land Project update.
- Advocacy Letter:
  - An advocacy letter has been prepared for Federal Election candidates urging them to make affordable housing a campaign priority. Specifically, to include within their campaign the need to increase access to capital for new social and nonprofit housing

developments, provide ongoing funding for repairs and increase federal investments to social supports and supportive housing solutions. A letter is currently with Mayor Breen to be signed. CHRA website has a template that can be sent directly to candidates, so members are recommended to encourage colleges to send their letters.

- Central Housing Update:
  - Currently this initiative is paused. There are continued conversations with CRA re: granting direct access to Option Cs for applicants and tenants. CRA requires legislation that states that this information can be collected. The City of St. John's Act (governing the municipal affairs of St. John's) outlines authority to acquire land, enter into housing agreements, provide housing, adopt building codes etc. but does not reference setting rents, collecting rent or verifying income. There are agreements signed with CMHC/NLHC that require verified income and dictate how rent must be calculated however these are agreements and do not provide the authority required. NLHC were granted permission under the Housing Corporation Act and the Intergovernmental Affairs Act. CSJ does not qualify under either of these. This will be addressed in the review of the St. John's Act that is currently underway.
- Social Media Strategy:
  - A subcommittee was established with marketing expert representation from Stella's, Choices for Youth, End Homelessness St. John's and the City of St. John's. The most recent meeting was held on August 16th. The subcommittee reviewed and discussed the proposed communications and social marketing plan. Work is underway to develop fact sheets that will debunk some of the fears associated with affordable housing projects and the meeting emphasized the need to use the community engagement tools outlined in the NIMBY toolkit to tackle perceived fears of lowered property values, increased crime, increased traffic etc. A long-term social marketing campaign was proposed to the group with the goal of supporting mixed income and integrated neighbourhoods. Next step is to finalize design and copy during the month of September. This will be vetted through the community partners. There will also

be an opportunity for committee members to bring back information to their organizations for input.

- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Project:
  - An energy audit was conducted on a vacant unit targeted for the energy retrofit project. Energy upgrades are now beginning to be implemented. Forest Road has digital thermostats beginning to be installed as well as attic insulation and air sealing within each of the units.
- NIMBY toolkit:
  - The NIMBY Toolkit is being updated in partnership with Poverty Reduction, Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.
- Successful Tenancies:
  - Some initial work has been done to connect with key service providers to deliver safe and healthy housing presentations that focus on education, identification and reporting of property standard violations. The first presentation is taking place September 20th with Correction Services Canada. Currently there is work being done to set up additional presentations with relevant stakeholders.
  - Next step is to reach out to Eastern Health in an effort to reach people exiting from Health Centers and HMP/Department of Justice. Emily Timmins to get contact information for Simone Lilly.
  - Randy Carew, Manager of Regulatory Services with the City's Dept. of Planning, Engineering & Regulatory Service has encouraged his inspection staff to present and sit in on these sessions to get background on safe and affordable housing.
  - Possibility for future presentations.
- The Interdepartmental Committee is still meeting. This committee is made up of Planning, Communications and Transportation.
- Evolution of Non-Market Housing Project:
  - Work on this project has paused. Michelle Porter to possibly contact Simone Lilly to continue.

- Non-Market Housing Tool:
  - All data for this project has now been mapped against intensification areas and transit routes. The mapping tool was vetted through the interdepartmental affordable housing working group and minor modifications are being made. The mapping tool will not be available for public use due to privacy legislation.

#### **4.2 Information note dated September 17, 2019 re: Housing Week in St. John's**

The Committee discussed the above noted and the following points are noteworthy:

- November 18th - 4:30pm - National Housing Day Proclamation at City Council Meeting
- Tentative: Possible launch of End Homelessness St. John's new Community Plan
- Infographics are currently being compiled to outline Key Housing Indicators for pieces of what's happening in St. John's to connect film "Push" and to encourage discussion. This film is tentatively scheduled to be viewed November 19, 2019 - 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. The event will include a meet and greet, film screening and panel discussion.
- Infographic handouts will be available on the current CSJ housing context which provide a snapshot of what housing need looks like in St John's i.e. highlight living wage, vacancy rate, rental rates, affordability levels by income/career.
- 3 key voices for this Panel discussion would be:
  - City Councillor
  - Sherwin Flight as the voice of tenants and landlords
  - Homebuilder/developer
- Councillor Jamieson spoke to the value of positive messages to show what work has been done locally on issues. A suggestion was made for the use of a diagram to show the pathway of the St. John's Housing Initiatives timeline and for that to be included with the infographic handout.

- Some key important messages the Panel felt should be addressed in the infographics are:
  - Represent how minimum wage is calculated currently (formula).
  - Cite where living wage comes from.
  - Average rents in the City for 1 and 2 bedroom housing.
  - Vacancy rate data and experts able to speak on this.
  - Resource section included with key takeaways i.e. tenant guide, strategies etc.
- Draft components considered to be included as part of this year's Affordable Housing Forum for November 20:
  - 1. CSJ Strategy- reporting on progress
  - 2. Keynote- Mixed income housing and communities strategies/diversifying revenue and housing models
  - 3. Launch of the NIMBY toolkit
  - 4. Design presentation
- It was noted that the Seniors Housing Forum is to be brought forward as a future focus and Simone Lilly will make the connection to Save Our Seniors group. The invitation for the Housing Needs Assessment will be extended to the Seniors group.
- Proposed bus tour on November 21<sup>st</sup> with 30-40 individuals to do key stops including a possible stop at Cochrane Center, Stella's Circle, drive by of Choices for Youth (new build), drive by Garrison Hill, stop at Brian Martin etc. Route to be mapped in LIS boardroom.

St. John's Housing Week Meeting sub-committee meeting scheduled for September 27 at 11:00 am.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Information note dated September 17, 2019 re: NIMBY Toolkit**

Emily Timmins provided a brief NIMBY ToolKit update of the three remaining:

- New Life Community Church - Clarenville
- Goose Bay groundbreaking - formal interview Oct 2, 2019

- Corner Brook Women's Centre

Revised files will be recirculated.

**5.2 Information note dated September 17, 2019 re: Housing Catalyst Fund**

Housing Catalyst is open for application. It was requested that the group circulate it.

**5.3 Information note dated September 23, 2019 re: Land Project**

Panel moved to an in-camera session for this item.

**5.4 EHSJ Update**

The Executive Director of EHSJ provided an update:

- Board of Directors is in place and the Community Advisory Board (CAB) is in place.
- Plan to move to rec center in Buckmasters Circle. The location is currently under renovations.
- Work is ongoing with the Community Plan. There will be an update provided in the future.
- Draft of Community Plan to go back to CAB by end of next week. Release is subject to CAB review, comments and approval.
- An update was provided on the work with the Province to secure funding.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

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CHAIRPERSON, SIMONE LILLY