

ST. JOHN'S

Affordable Housing Working Group Minutes

June 26, 2019

12:00 p.m.

Carnell Room, 4th Floor Annex, City Hall

Present:

- Judy Tobin, Manager of Housing, Acting Chair
- Councillor Hope Jamieson
- Jill Snow, CMHC
- Gail Thornhill, Stella's Circle
- Grayson Kelly, NLHC
- Emily Timmons, Poverty Reduction, Gov NL
- Andrew Harvey, First Light
- Doug Pawson, End Homelessness St. John's
- Ayon Shahed, Choices for Youth
- Karen Chafe, Supervisor – Office of the City Clerk

Regrets:

- Simone, Lilly, Affordable Housing & Development Facilitator, Chairperson
- Victoria Belbin, Canadian Homebuilders Association

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved By Andrew Harvey

Seconded By Grayson Kelly

That the agenda be adopted as presented

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of Minutes – May 16, 2019

Moved By Andrew Harvey

Seconded By Grayson Kelly

That the minutes of the Affordable Housing Working Group held on May 16, 2019 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Information Note: Update and Discussion on Affordable Housing Initiatives

The Acting 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:
 - This report is finally completed and will be referred to the July 10th Committee of the Whole meeting for recommendation of approval and subsequent final approval by Council.
 - The Committee's direction was requested as to how this should be presented publicly, and it was suggested that the Communications Division be consulted in this regard. As well, sessions could be held to provide further focus. Though the November forum is months away, it could also be highlighted during that time.
- Land Inventory:
 - The City has identified four parcels of land for potential redevelopment.
 - A recommendation is being prepared for one of those and a meeting will be set up in early fall to discuss potential options for the other three parcels of land identified.
- Planning and Building Approval Processes
- Central Housing Waitlist
- Evolution of Non-Market Housing Project:
 - Suggestion was made that this work might be done by someone in the MUN Geography Department and/or find other ways to partner with MUN on this project. Emily agreed to check into potential prospects.
- Social Marketing Strategy:
 - The next meeting for this initiative is July 11th. The Committee will be kept apprised of updates.

- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Project:
 - Ayon referenced his thermal engineering background and experience with conducting energy audits. He suggested that if there's any kind of advisory role, he would be willing to share his experience.
- Non-Market Housing Tool:
 - The City's LIS Division has been consulted in this regard and are keen to assist.
 - The development of this tool could also be leveraged as an asset that other City depts could use in their planning processes.
- Nimby toolkit:
 - Emily noted that she has two summer students to help with projects this summer and one can take on updating the toolkit. She has contacted Simone in this regard, and they will consult with Victoria as to how this should unfold.
- Successful tenancies:
 - A presentation on the reporting of property standards violations through community groups is being worked on by Randy Carew, Manager of Regulatory Services with the City's Dept. of Planning, Engineering & Regulatory Services. He will consult with various community groups and agencies in this regard and he is currently working on his presentation which will be ready in the Fall.

4.2 Information Note: Rental Control Legislation:

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

- Council has received very little feedback on this matter, and it does not appear to be a major area of concern requiring further Council action.
- The information prepared by Sherwin Flight can be considered as information at this point and should remain an internal document providing one perspective on the matter.
- Should Council direct future reconsideration, it is important to have accurate and objective information in addition to the above cited report, including legislative considerations as outlined in the provincially governed Residential Tenancies Act under which the City is governed.
- Affordable housing, as opposed to rent control is the real issue and it was the Committee's consensus that this is where the City's focus

should remain, particularly in terms of its commitment as outlined in its Strategic Directions.

4.3 Upcoming Federal Election

The Committee considered the information note dated May 9, 2019 in relation to affordable housing advocacy as it pertains to the upcoming federal election in October, 2019. The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) has formally launched their election campaign – *A Home for Everyone*, outlining key election messages which can be accessed at this website: <https://www.ahomeforeveryone.ca/>

The Committee discussed whether this campaign should be reinforced by any efforts of this Committee and/or if its own position should be prepared. The following feedback was received from Committee members as a result of the May meeting:

- Not enough purpose-built affordable and supportive housing solutions (e.g. seniors, youth, indigenous, disability etc.)
- Limited integration of housing and homelessness policies with social determinants of health. Continues to be an afterthought vs. part of the start point.
- Stigma around affordable housing; lack of community integration efforts and/or a broad-based communications strategy to de-stigmatize affordable housing.
- Affordability
- Availability/Supply
- Continuum of types (lack of 24 hour staffed facilities for example)

Councillor Jamieson felt the AHWG should outline the issues it sees as important and to question federal candidates on what they can do to address and support those issues. This exercise would be particularly worthwhile if it is tied to the Council approved strategic directions and ten-year strategy on affordable housing. It was agreed that a letter be drafted for the Mayor's signature and that such be presented around mid-September which is timely for the October 19th federal election.

5. NEW ARISING

5.1 Housing Forum - November 22nd

The following ideas were outlined as potential focus topics for the housing forum in November:

- Sessions on homeless people and other vulnerable groups;
- Delve into housing needs assessments around indigenous and seniors - what are the needs for those groups;
- Landlords – how can they work with the organizations that are available to support affordable housing – creating partnerships, etc.;
- Developers – how can they create developments that are marketable as well as affordable;
- Should housing forum be bigger to accommodate more indepth breakout sessions and focus groups? Some felt that the half day format is enough, noting it is tough to keep people engaged beyond that timeframe;
- Efforts should be made to attract people to the forum who would not usually attend but who would have important input. It was suggested that Sherwin Flight’s Facebook page would be an effective tool to assist in spreading the word about the forum;
- Need to focus on success stories outlining a diversified cross section of scenarios/examples;
- Learning topics should be presented such as the Housing Strategy Act and how to interpret it for municipalities, etc. The Provincial Housing and Homelessness report is hopefully coming out this summer and that could be an area of focus.

Jill agreed to assist Simone with the forum’s planning. It is anticipated that a meeting would be scheduled in late summer for this purpose.

6. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Judy Tobin
Acting Chairperson