

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHCCAC)

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020 and the
current Order of the Provincial Health Officer *Gatherings and Events***

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Chair, City Council Member
Tanis Anderson	- Representative, School District 40
Brian Curry	- Community Member
Stephanie Erdelyi	- Representative, Child Care Advocacy Organization
Briana Harris	- Community Member
Hortensia Moreno	- Community Member (Left at 6:20 p.m.)
Jayne Ogundehinde	- Community Member
Iulia Sincaian	- Community Member
Andii Stephens	- Community Member
Betina Wheeler	- Representative, Homelessness Coalition Society

MEMBERS REGRETS:

Justin Byers	- Representative, BC Housing
Wes Everaars	- Community Member
Jennifer Fane	- Community Member
Blaine Kane	- Representative, Indigenous Advocacy or Social Service Organization

STAFF PRESENT:

Claudia Freire	- Housing / Social Planner
Anur Mehdic	- Housing / Child Care Planning Analyst
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee of February 9, 2021

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the February 9, 2021 Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee meeting be adopted with the following amendment:

- *Add Jayne Ogundehinde to the list of members present.*

CARRIED.

All Committee members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS

None

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Housing Needs Report Update

Claudia Freire, Housing/Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation about the City's Housing Needs Report, noting that the report is required of local governments to describe current and anticipated housing needs and identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply. Ms. Freire highlighted the following points:

- A consultant has been hired to prepare the report on behalf of the City and in consultation with Metro Vancouver;
- The objectives of the upcoming public consultation, which is set to launch in late April; and,
- Opportunities for the Committee to provide input, including an online survey, and virtual workshops.

Ms. Freire noted that further information would be shared with the Committee once the information is posted on the City's new engagement platform, Be Heard New West (beheardnewwest.ca).

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Community Action Network Program

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Community Action Network (CAN) Leadership Training program, including the following information:

- Background to the program and the need for people with lived and living experience to be acknowledged, consulted, and compensated, as subject matter experts with valuable first-hand knowledge into the development and implementation of City policies and initiatives that affect their lives;
- Themes, findings and highlights of the initial training program, which took place in the fall of 2020, with 10 participants; and,
- Next steps for the program, which were endorsed by Council in March 2021.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr. Mehdić noted that the Ethics and Engagement project referred to in the presentation is provided through the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and is intended to develop a framework to inform and evaluate City engagement resources, strategies and training methods, with the objective of facilitating greater engagement by people with lived and living experience.

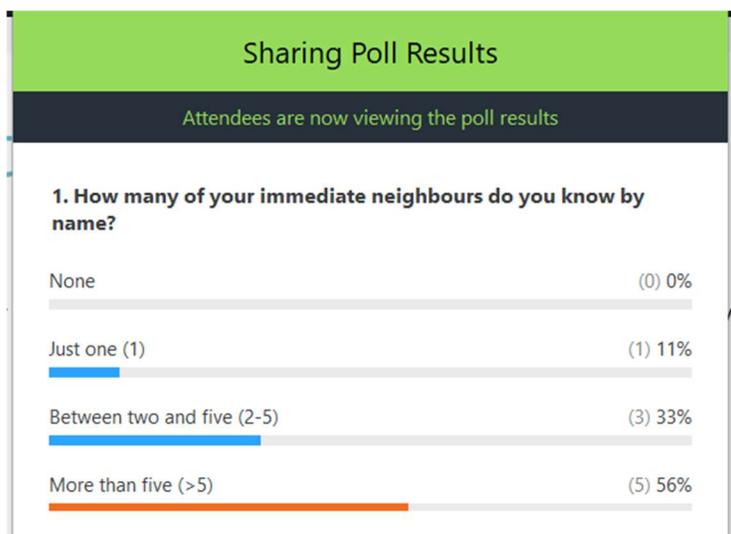
The Committee noted appreciation for this work within the City.

5.2 Hey Neighbour Collective

Anur Mehdić, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation updating the Committee on the Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC), which is a systems change project bringing together many different community entities with the intention of facilitating social connectedness, resilience and community engagement in multi-unit residential buildings.

Mr. Mehdić highlighted the desired outcomes of the HNC program, presented a case study from an HNC project in Vancouver, and noted that Council has approved the City to be a partner in the HNC, with a pilot project site within the City to be determined soon.

Committee members provided the following responses to two polls that were presented for their input:



Committee members provided the following comments in response to questions regarding neighbourly connectivity and relationships:

What types of things help you connect with your neighbours?

- Meeting outside and doing work together, such as gardening projects;
- Organized social events, such as barbeques, holiday celebrations, and communal meals;
- Children playing outside;
- Meeting outside with pets;
- Acknowledging each other, small acts of kindness, being friendly;
- Learning each other's languages;
- Facebook groups and notice boards;
- Dealing with complaints or resolving building issues, such as at Strata Council meetings; and,
- The COVID-19 pandemic, by being at home more frequently and spending time outside.

Have your relationships with neighbours changed during the pandemic?

Have relationships with your neighbours been valuable during the pandemic?

- In general, the pandemic has been valuable for improving relationships with neighbours;
- Neighbours have been helpful and watching out for each other, such as delivering meals; and,
- The pandemic has highlighted the benefits of inter-generational aspects of co-ops and multi-family living.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Mehdic provided the following information:

- Ross Tower has been identified as a potential case study building in New Westminster because of medical vulnerabilities in the area;
- The lessons learned in the HNC case study could be replicated in the neighbouring buildings around Ross Tower;
- The HNC is geared towards multi-unit buildings due to the fact that the scale of units can lead to loneliness and isolation;
- The HNC program could work in strata buildings; however the pilot is concentrating on rental because of the large amount of rental buildings in the City;
- The pilot program is intended to highlight and learn from challenges and successes and to implement these learnings when the program rolls out to other buildings in the City.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- Appreciation was shown for the HNC idea, and also that the program is not carried out in seclusion, but provides for connections with other buildings as well;
- Without organization within multi-unit buildings, it tends to be very difficult to meet people because of the amount of floors in high residential buildings;
- There may be an opportunity to locate a food program location near Ross Tower during the pilot project; and,
- There may opportunities for the Homelessness Coalition to support the project in conjunction with the other organizations that are involved, such as the City, BC Housing, Fraser Health and post-secondary institutions.

5.3 Affordable Housing Be Heard New West Update

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, highlighted the City's Be Heard New West platform (beheardnewwest.ca), which is a new public engagement tool, and encouraged Committee members to visit the site to find information, updates and opportunities to participate in engagement activities about various types of projects in the City, including housing, child care, transportation, and more.

Mr. Mehdic highlighted an affordable housing project proposed at 823-841 Sixth Street, which is currently on the site.

The Committee provided the following comments in response to the question: *Does the AHCC Committee have additional affordable housing issues to identify, which staff could present to the AHCC Task Force?:*

- It would be appreciated to have time to think about issues, and send them to staff or raise them at the next meeting; and,
- It would be valuable to discuss methods and strategies for holding public hearings on contentious issues with less conflict within neighbourhoods.

5.4 Child Care and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation on Council's request for an update on Child Care in the City, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and reviewed some findings from the 2018 Child Care Needs Assessment.

Committee members provided the following comments in response to questions regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on childcare in the City?

What are some of the impacts of the COVID 19 Pandemic on Child Care in the City of New Westminster in the Short Term (6-12 months) and Long Term (12 months and above)?:

- Stress and confusion has been experienced about the vaccination process and information about childcare workers' access;
- There has been observed tiredness, stress, lack of respect for the profession and child care workers being overworked;
- There is a systemic problem in that while child care staff work in the profession out of love and care for children, it is becoming difficult to maintain staffing levels because of burn out, and pre-pandemic issues (low wages, high education requirements, under-valued profession) have been exacerbated;
- There should be more of a working relationship between the City, School District 40 (SD40) and Fraser Health to resolve some of the issues of provision of after-school programs;
- Creative solutions should be found for offering a greater number of after-school programs within City and SD40 facilities, using existing Parks & Receptions buildings and work force;
- The greatest barrier to creating after-school programs is staffing;
- In the long term, there is hope that the pandemic has highlighted the work and importance of child care providers and that going forward it would be looked at as an essential service; and,
- The movement of childcare into the provincial Ministry of Education is a positive step forward.

Mr. Mehdic discussed the Child Care Working Group, which was created in response to the pandemic, and noted that the Committee's feedback would be provided to the Working Group. He noted that staffing has been a common theme in the discussions and the Working Group is trying to highlight the importance of Child Care workers through a proclamation at Council and advocating to the province.

5.5 Child Care Be Heard New West Update

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, highlighted a proposal currently listed on the Be Heard New West platform to convert a single detached house at 733 Thirteenth Street into a licensed group child care facility with up to 37 spaces.

In response to the question *Does the AHCC Committee have additional affordable child care issues to identify, which staff could present to the AHCC Task Force?*, members noted that it would be beneficial to bring more information about the Child Care Needs Assessment to a future Committee meeting.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

6.1 CAN Report to Council

The Chair noted that the report was included in the agenda package.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Location to be confirmed.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Certified correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
COUNCILLOR JAIMIE MCEVOY
CHAIR

ORIGINAL SIGNED
HEATHER CORBETT
COMMITTEE CLERK