

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHCCAC)

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020 and
Order of the Provincial Health Officer *Gatherings and Events – February 5, 2021***

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Chair, City Council Member
Brian Curry	- Community Member
Stephanie Erdelyi	- Representative, Child Care Advocacy Organization
Wes Everaars	- Community Member
Jennifer Fane	- Community Member
Briana Harris	- Community Member
Jayne Ogundehinde	- Community Member
Iulia Sincaian	- Community Member
Andii Stephens	- Community Member
Betina Wheeler	- Representative, Homelessness Coalition Society

MEMBERS REGRETS:

Tanis Anderson	- Representative, School District 40
Justin Byers	- Representative, BC Housing
Blaine Kane	- Representative, Indigenous Advocacy or Social Service Organization
Hortensia Moreno	- Community Member

GUESTS:

Dr. Elliot Rossiter	- Douglas College
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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 HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 Background and Introductions

Heather Corbett, Committee Clerk, led a round of introductions and briefly reviewed how to use the online meeting functions.

2.0 ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

3.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee of February 11, 2020

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the February 11, 2020 Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All Committee members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Changing the Conversation: Reflective Empathy and Public Discourse on Social Housing

Dr. Elliot Rossiter, Douglas College, provided a PowerPoint presentation about the “Changing the Conversation Project” at Douglas College, and led a group discussion on the subject of improving public discourse about controversial affordable housing issues in the community. Dr. Rossiter noted that the project was developed after a City Public Hearing about social housing prompted him to examine how to have better conversations around this topic or restructure public dialogue so that marginalized people have their stories represented authentically and in a balanced manner.

Dr. Rossiter discussed the next steps in the project and asked the Committee to discuss words that came to mind when discussing Affordable Housing from their point-of-view and from others’ points of view. The results included:

- Equity,
- Justice,
- Accessible,
- Safety,
- Human right,
- NIMBY
- Poverty,
- Crime,
- Subsidized,
- Property prices,
- Undesirables

The Committee provided comments in response to the following questions posed by Dr. Rossiter:

1) *How do we ensure that the perspectives of those with lived and living experience of housing insecurity are better represented in public discussions about affordable housing?*

- The City is partnering with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to involve people with lived and living experience in poverty and homelessness through the Community Action Network Leadership Training Program. This will help inform and evaluate engagement resources, strategies and training materials related to engaging people with lived and living experience.

2) *How do we create spaces in the community where people can learn, discuss, and listen to each other in relation to housing issues?*

- Provide environments that ensure people with lived and living experience feel safe and included, allowing them to share their experiences and for others to understand their point of view;
- Be aware of controversy and potentially threatening environments and create safe spaces for the community to be heard and not to feel afraid to share their opinions and experiences; and,
- Create alternate structures to provide feedback, such as workshops or focus groups, rather than Public Hearing-type environments, which can be very confrontational.

3) *How can we have dialogue that is less shaped by anger, fear, and isolation and more shaped by empathy, hope, and inclusivity?*

- Provide equity-levelling mechanisms, such as alternate times and remote platforms (providing that access to internet is attainable); and,
- Providing a safe environment to be heard has been an advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee noted that a further opportunity to discuss Public Hearings and how they are handled in terms of controversial projects would be welcome.

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Appointment of Alternate Chair to Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Andii Stephens be appointed as the Alternate Chair of the Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee for the 2021 term.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

7.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

7.1 Affordable Housing Update

Anur Mehdić, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, and Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation containing a brief update on several of the City's Affordable Housing initiatives and next steps for the projects, as follows:

- 1) Small Sites Affordable Housing Initiative, which includes affordable housing projects on City-owned sites in Connaught Heights and Queensborough.

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

- In regards to the Queensborough location, the site was deemed unsuitable for an apartment building; however other types of housing and affordability models may be more suitable and a Request for Proposal (RFP) process may encompass more types of housing going forward; and
- The operator of these projects would be a non-profit, and the occupants do not need to be living in the City already, as they would be housed based on greatest need.

The Committee noted that a Habitat for Humanity style of project may be worth consideration for the small site in Queensborough, as they can be built quickly and the low number of units usually planned for in HFH sites may be suitable, given the geotechnical limitations.

- 2) Rapid Response Modular Supportive Housing at 838 Ewen Avenue (in Queensborough)

Mr. Mehdić noted that the project has been completed and the community has been very supportive.

3) Housing Needs Report Update

Ms. Freire advised that the City's Consultant has prepared a preliminary draft of the City's Housing Needs Report (HNR) and is preparing for the Phase 2 Consultation plan, which intends to inform the community about the HNR and focus on connecting with people to uncover any missing housing issues or concerns. The final report is likely to be prepared for review by the end of 2021.

4) Shelter and Housing for the Homeless and At-Risk of Homelessness

Ms. Freire provided statistics on homelessness in New Westminster and information on initiatives that are underway to find solutions for the City's most vulnerable residents, including:

- Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Program: Active until March 31, 2021;
- Emergency Response Centre (ERC): The City is working with BC Housing to identify suitable locations for an ERC; and,
- Supportive Housing: Staff are working with BC Housing on the provision of up to 100 units on two sites, under the Federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative funding. If approved, the units could be in place by March 2022.

5) Affordable Housing Issue Identification

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 or bring back to the Committee?", no issues were identified.

7.2 Affordable Child Care Update

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation containing a brief update on the City's Child Care initiatives, as follows:

1) Working Group and Operators Survey

Mr. Mehdic provided information about the Child Care Working Group (CCWG), which was created at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to support operators and parents, and which continues to meet on a weekly basis with participants from various groups, including the Ministry, School District 40, YMCA, Fraser Health, child care operators and City staff.

Mr. Mehdic further noted that the Working Group was able to initiate a Child Care Operator Survey and highlighted some key findings of the survey.

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

- Although 80% of the survey respondents indicated that they would be interested in networking, no events have been organized yet; and,
- The Working Group has expanded recently to include a representative from Kinsight to speak specifically to the needs of specialized childcare for children with developmental delays or disabilities.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The City is commended for taking the initiative on forming the CCWG, as it is very collaborative and generates supportive discussion;
- It will be interesting to observe child care within the context of the pandemic and how parents' working environments evolve; and,
- In future iterations of the survey, it would be important to include a question about whether the child care supplied was home-based or centre-based, as it would give a more detailed picture of the landscape. Other studies have shown that home care operators have had significantly more challenges.

2) Initiated and Ongoing Child Care Projects

Mr. Mehdic gave details of three child care projects in the City, totaling 118 spaces, noting that all are getting back on-track despite the pandemic.

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

- The proposed child care centres at City-owned properties will be run by operators who are identified through an RFP process; and,
- The City is ensuring that these child care spaces are affordable in perpetuity through the use of provincial funding and legal agreements with the developers and SD40.

Mr. Mehdic noted that he did not have the information at hand about how much consideration was given to making the spaces at Richard McBride before and after school programs, and he would provide further clarification to the Committee at a later meeting.

The Committee noted that involving the selected child care providers at an early stage in the construction of the child care centres would be beneficial so that they can be involved in the design of the spaces from the outset, and contribute their knowledge of the Fraser Health requirements for the space.

3) Affordable Child Care Issue Identification

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", the following issues were identified:

- It would be useful to share the City’s child care needs assessment with the Committee, so that it is clear where the most urgent child care needs are; and,
- The City should develop child care spaces based on the specific age needs that have not already been catered to.

7.3 Information and Resources Dissemination Update

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided information on the COVID-19 resources that have been developed for the community by the City’s COVID-19 Task Forces, and are available on the City’s website.

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Location to be confirmed.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Certified correct,

 ORIGINAL SIGNED
COUNCILLOR JAIMIE MCEVOY
CHAIR

 ORIGINAL SIGNED
HEATHER CORBETT
COMMITTEE CLERK