



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 11, 2013 5:30 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2
City Hall

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Chair
Norah Andrew	- Community Member
Nancy Brar	- Community Member
Ashley Currie	- School District No. 40 Representative
Chinu Das	- Community Member
Briana Tomkinson	- Community Member

REGRETS:

Catherine Cheng	- Community Member
Yasser Elmasri	- Community Member
Judith Hockney	- Fraser Health Representative
Christine Vickers	- Community Member
Lillian Whitmore	- Community Member

STAFF:

Beverly Grieve	- Acting Director, Development Services (departed at 6:30 pm)
John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Terry Dunlop	- Recording Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

No additions were brought forward.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of May 7, 2011

MOVED and SECONDED

***THAT** the minutes of the Community and Social Issues Committee meeting held on May 7 2013 be received and adopted.*

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Secured Market Rental Housing Policy

Beverly Grieve, Acting Director of Development Services, reviewed a presentation on the city's recently adopted Secured Market Rental Housing Policy, approved by Council on May 13, 2013. Council views the policy as a priority issue.

The policy is to provide incentives that encourage development of secured market rental housing projects by private developers. Housing Agreements will secure the policy and covenants will prevent later conversion to strata title.

Key aspects of the policy are:

- Retention of the existing (rental) housing stock
- Renewal of the existing rental housing stock
- Enhancement to the rental housing stock
- Annual monitoring and ongoing policy evaluation

Rental housing serves a population that includes immigrants, seniors and "Millennials" (young adults leaving school/training) who are often not served best by the ownership option. Rental of condominium and/or secondary suites does not provide long-term security since owners (or family members) wishing to move into units are permitted to evict tenants.

As the city's rental housing stock ages and redevelopment of sites for condominium structures offer a more profitable option, the SMRHP provides targeted interventions at specific points along the rental housing continuum. Restrictions aim at securing the long-term rental inventory by protecting properties from demolition or repurposing as ownership housing. Specific incentives for property owners and developers will encourage them either to retain and repair existing rental housing or to create new rental housing stock. The policy will increase the supply and security of rental units without government subsidies.

In ensuing discussion, the following items were addressed:

- Property tax revenues are not adversely affected.
- When incentives are offered, staff is able to negotiate details such as a mix of units and the number of bedrooms, etc. The City has had considerable success in this regard.
- As development of sites close to transit is encouraged, proponents may undertake parking studies to justify fewer parking stalls and allow them to

avoid payments in-lieu (re parking requirements) that would normally be applied.

- The City gives priority in processing approvals and relaxes some of its servicing requirements.
- When replacing rental housing, the City monitors the developer and there is an expectation of follow-through with similar housing stock.
- There has been significant developer interest in the policy. Proponents are seeking long-term income with reliable tenants. There has been considerable interest in the Downtown area.
- Examples of development sites include two parking lots and a small business building.
- The City stipulates that urban design issues are non-negotiable. Neighbourhood densities are addressed through the Official Community Plan (OCP) process [the OCP is currently under review/update].
- The City helps with conversions that provide secondary suites; laneway housing issues will also be addressed as part of the OCP review process.
- Numerous incentives apply to all non-profit housing; however, senior governments no longer subsidise cooperative housing developments.
- If there is relaxation of requirements for streetscaping, the City must avoid potential “ghettoization” of rental housing areas. Government housing projects have often been responsible for negative neighbourhood impacts. Neighbourhoods must be attractive.
- The City should ensure provision of neighbourhood park development and public amenities. Council is addressing park development issues.

Ms. Grieve departed the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

3.2 Safe Harbour: Respect for All Program

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, reviewed a presentation on the Safe Harbour Program, adopted by Council on June 10, 2013. Participating program locations welcome clients and customers in a respectful manner and provide an immediate safe place for someone experiencing discrimination. Managers and staff of such locations receive training and resources to operationalize these commitments.

Program locations display a window decal, a certificate, and other signage that proudly announces to the community that their management and staff welcome and support newcomers, visible minorities, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

Safe Harbour is offered by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services of BC (AMSSA) and locations include the Cities of Burnaby and Vancouver, Canada Safeway, RBC, RONA, the Surrey Board of Trade, and VanCity. Mr. Stark concluded with information that the Human Resources Department has a training budget for the program and workshops will be ongoing.

In ensuing discussion, the following points were addressed:

- The federal government is removing responsibility for the program from provincial administration.
- The Public Library is viewed as a welcoming and inclusive space by respondents to a recent immigrant and refugee survey, followed by Centennial Community Centre, the Canada Games Pool and City Hall.
- City certification takes about one year.
- Training will begin in the fall and it is anticipated that there will be an immediate involvement of various City departments.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No items submitted.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 New Animal Shelter for New Westminster

Chair, Councillor McEvoy provided an oral update on a recent City Council resolution approving construction of a new animal shelter in New Westminster. The Chair noted there was no clear venue for animal issues in the city and he suggested potential involvement of the Community and Social Issues Committee. The matter was taken under advisement for future consideration.

5.2 Cities Reducing Poverty Charter

John Stark, Senior Social Planner outlined the Charter and inquired as to committee support for a recommendation to Council.

Ensuing discussion addressed the following points:

- If enough municipalities join in the initiative, it will lead to dissemination and sharing of more information.
- The Charter seeks to assist jurisdictions involved in poverty issues and with lobbying senior levels of government.
- The Charter “dovetails” with many of the City’s existing policies. It identifies some of the root causes of poverty and appears relevant for the City and community as a whole.
- Given the population of vulnerable residents in the municipality, the City should consider endorsing a document that supports an overarching approach to dealing with the issues, rather than tackling them piecemeal or in an ad hoc manner.
- The City believes in a proactive role and is pleased with the multi-sector collaboration.
- The Charter provides a chance to catch people before they slide into poverty.
- The Vancouver Sun newspaper has been running a series that highlights various poverty issues, including child poverty.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Community and Social Issues Committee Council refer the Vibrant Communities Canada – Cities Reducing Poverty Charter to Council for consideration and endorsement.

CARRIED.

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

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

The Committee received the following reports and information, as attached to the agenda:

6.1 Cities Reducing Poverty Charter

6.2 Envision New Westminster 2032
(Council endorsed the document)

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

No items submitted.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

September 10, 2013 – 5:30pm, Committee Room 2, City Hall

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 7:10 pm.

Councillor J. McEvoy
Chair

Terry Dunlop
Recording Clerk