



Making a difference...together

Minutes of a Meeting of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee

December 12, 2022, 10:00am - 12:00 pm, Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)

PRESENT: Danella Parks (Acting Chair), Don McTavish, Kirsten Baillie, Stirling Scory, Andrea Hudson, David Corey, Kerriann Coady.

STAFF: Nadine Kawata, Emily Sinclair, Jelena Putnik (recorder)

REGRETS: Alita Tocher, Luke Mari, Lindsay Chase, Brian Green, Bill Brown, Pam Hartling.

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am.

1. Territorial acknowledgement

Acting Chair Danella Parks offered a territorial acknowledgement of the Indigenous communities in the Capital Region.

2. Welcome and approval of Agenda

MOVED by Don McTavish, **SECONDED** by Stirling Scory

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

3. Approval of July 29, 2022 Minutes

MOVED by Danella Parks, **SECONDED** by Don McTavish

That the minutes from the June 29, 2022 RHAC meeting be approved with correction of spelling of Stirling Scory's name.

CARRIED

4. Business Arising

- **None**

5. Topics for Discussion:

HAP Business Development – Consultant presentation and engagement of RHAC input

- The CRD has engaged the services of Urban Matters business consultants to review the Housing Agreement Program (HAP) for potential for future growth to address need, and recommend a model that would enable greater efficiency, sustainability, and scalability.
- Marina Jozipovic and Matt Thompson from Urban Matters provided brief overview of HAP and outlined consultation process and timeline.
 - Phase 1 - Dec/22- Jan/23: Current review of program and interviews with CRD Staff
 - Phase 2 - Dec/22- Jan/23: Engagement with municipalities and key stakeholders – survey and targeted interviews
 - Phase 3 - Feb-Mar/23: Recommendations

Urban Matters posed the following questions to the group and received feedback indicated:

What is working well? What has been tricky? What is something that you think could be done differently?

- Andrea requested to share these questions with colleagues at City of Victoria who have more direct experience with HAP, to get their input. Stirling echoed this for View Royal.
- Nadine, speaking from her past role at Saanich, indicated that Saanich planners found the program very beneficial and have been receiving more rental inquiries lately.
- Urban Matters indicated that, in their previous work with municipalities, they have heard that there isn't administrative capacity within municipal staff to manage housing agreements like CRD is providing with this program.
- Urban Matters would like to hear what will help municipalities do their work better and capture affordable units better, while keeping process streamlined for developers and development community. How can the CRD help, and what does that look like?
- Emily indicated that she would be interested in gathering HAP data to help with reporting in achieving our Regional Growth Strategy goals.
- Jelena shared past comment from Bill Brown who indicated that Esquimalt does not have the administrative capacity to manage housing agreements and benefits from CRDs HAP administration. Stirling echoed that for View Royal. Andrea Hudson stated that even larger municipalities, such as Victoria, do not have the administrative capacity to monitor housing agreements, and benefit from CRD handling it.
- Kirsten stated that prescribed requirements to non-profit housing agreements often cripple projects because of their lack of adaptability to funding source requirements. She advocated for flexibility in how housing agreement programs are structured. She suggested a simple 10% RGI units requirement would be workable for projects to achieve success.

For municipalities who have not engaged with HAP before: Do you think the HAP is a valuable service? Do you anticipate that your organization will engage with the HAP over the next year? How about five years from now? Does your organization have any particular barriers to participating?

- Danella highlighted importance of informing community of when/where affordable units are coming so that people in need, and organizations supporting them, can be aware.
- Nadine, speaking from her past role at Saanich, echoed Kirsten Baillie's comments around funding flexibility and stated that BC Housing and CRD both had suggested aligning affordability so that projects would be eligible for senior government funding.
- Kirsten reiterated that if municipal affordability requirements do not align with senior government funding programs, it is often impossible for a non-profit developer to complete a project because they cannot access senior levels of government funding.
- Stirling highlighted that timelines needed to go through municipal zoning/permitting process often impact project feasibility in today's market because of rising costs.

Do you believe the CRD Housing Agreement Program provides the support to achieve the level of affordability required to address housing needs or the tenure required to address housing needs? (understanding that affordability will be set by municipalities earlier in the process and prior to reaching the stage of CRD HAP)

- Matt pulled in the previous discussion about setting of affordability by municipalities and asked whether municipalities felt there is a role for CRD to support in that process?
- Emily asked if there is consistency and alignment with affordability goals/definitions among municipalities and whether the scope of this HAP review will gather this info? Urban Matters indicated this is beyond scope of this project, but will include a survey question to solicit what municipalities goals/definitions of affordability are.

Actions: Urban Matters will provide a copy of the presentation to CRD staff for circulation to RHAC representatives and their municipalities for input. A formal survey will be sent by Urban Matters to municipal staff in the region in January 2023 for structured input on HAP current and future needs.

RHAC's Strategic Planning Priority Recommendations for CRD Hospitals and Housing Committee. What are RHAC member key priorities?

- RHAC members were provided with 4 broad areas of CRD Board focus (Confidential) for consideration and input, and came up with the following key recommendations:
 - **Category #1 - Increase affordable housing supply/stock in the region (through programs/initiatives/actions)**
 - *Develop ongoing Regional Housing First Program.* Program worked well and was key in leveraging funding from senior levels of government.
 - *Develop a region-wide common language for affordability/attainability (affordable housing).* Will be useful for councils to know if they are meeting their objectives.
 - *Develop a Regional Acquisition Strategy that works with municipalities to acquire land for non-profit housing.*
 - *Advocate for update to Local Government Act that would permit municipalities to ask for amenities and not have to go through a rezoning and negotiation process.* Ensure municipal alignment for any advocacy.
 - Related issues/concerns:**
 - *Ensure adequate municipal staffing to reduce permitting and zoning processing time and improve efficiency.*
- **Category #2: Create inclusive and equitable housing, especially family friendly housing.**
- **Category #3: Climate Action through housing investment.**
 - *Integrate housing and land use near transit and community amenities. Facilitate cooperation of municipalities in a coordinated approach.*
 - *Coordinate regional land acquisition to purchase land for affordable housing along transit corridors.*
- **Category #4: Improve Housing Data**
 - *Develop and implement performance measures/spatial data related to full range of new units being built (size, proximity to transit, accessibility, affordability).*

6. Next Meeting: Q1 2023 (date TBD)

7. Adjournment

MOVED by Andrea, **SECONDED** by Sterling

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 am.