

Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee

Meeting held January 25, 2022

A meeting of the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Marina Clemens, Chair
Councillor Kieran McKenzie
Jessica Brunet
Fiona Coughlin
Phil Dorner (arrives at 10:37 a.m.)
Kathy Hay
Eric Hill (arrives at 10:06 a.m.)
Mayor Gary McNamara, Town of Tecumseh
Jim Steele
Leigh Vachon
Joyce Zuk

Regrets received from:

Angela Yakonich
Judith Binder

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Debbie Cercone, Executive Director, Housing & Children's Services
Kirk Whittal, new Executive Director, Housing & Children's Services
Michael Cooke, Manager Planning Policy, Deputy City Planner
Kelly Goz, Manager, Homelessness & Housing Support
Jennifer Tanner, Manager Homelessness & Housing Support
Jeannie Diamond Francis, County of Essex
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:03 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by F. Coughlin, seconded by Mayor G. McNamara,
That the minutes of the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee of its meeting held November 23, 2021 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 Residential Rental Licensing Pilot Study

The Chair advises that she recently met with J. Zuk and A. Angelidis to discuss their submission to the Environment, Transportation and Public Safety Standing Committee and City Council on the Residential Rental Licensing Pilot Study.

J. Zuk advises that they do not want the cost of licensing to be borne by renters and the only mechanism is for the City to absorb the costs. She asks if municipalities have to recover the costs of licensing, or is it an option, as they do not want to contravene the *Municipal Act*.

Councillor McKenzie strongly supports the city proceeding with the licensing pilot. It is important to remember that this is a pilot project and if Council chooses to proceed with the citywide policy, HHAC's feedback is extremely essential. The impact on rental costs is at the top of the list. There is not a strong sentiment on Council to absorb those costs to subsidize the landlords to register into this program. There is a willingness on Council to explore what should be done to provide protection to the tenants in our community. There is a serious issue respecting the living conditions that some people are experiencing mostly due to bad landlords. The good landlords will sign up and the bad landlords will not; we are adding costs to the good landlords who will pass along those costs to their renters.

Mayor G. McNamara echoes the comments by Councillor McKenzie relating to the good and the bad landlords and asks how do we make this a level playing field.

F. Coughlin states that what is happening in Windsor is attractive to all kinds of people who are investing and positioning themselves as building or providing affordable housing. They are leveraging that language to support funding and they are not necessarily very scrupulous organizations. Council needs to use the tools at their disposal to control that external investment in Windsor where some bad actors are

coming; buying up all the properties, driving up all of the housing prices, which means all rentals across the board, will increase. She adds that she is in support of the pilot study.

J. Zuk adds that if a licensing regime comes into effect with costs to landlords, we know that it will be borne by the tenants within the confines of provincial legislation. The landlords are struggling and are not getting the margins that they are looking for on rents. It is not HHAC's job to find the solution for Council on how to implement this; HHAC's job is to raise this issue, which could potentially impact rents in a very tight market. She proposes a one-page brief be provided to Council along with the Administrative report in April 2022.

4.2 Updates from Administration

D. Cercone provides an update of the **Community Housing Renewal Allocations under the OPHI and COCHI Program:**

- In August of 2021, the MMAH confirmed the funding allocations for the first year (2022-23) of the second three-year funding period for Windsor Essex.
- Details of the funding allocations for year two and three (2023-24, 2024-25) of this phase of funding were not provided which results in a short-term program planning as opposed to strategic multi-year planning.
- The objective of the Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) is to protect tenants in current programs with expiring operating agreements/mortgages to begin to stabilize the supply of community housing through repairs, renovations and operating support.
- COCHI funding is to be used only in social and community housing; to protect, regenerate and expand social housing and to reduce housing need in social housing; and to preserve Native Urban units – no net loss of units.
- The components of the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) includes –
- Rental housing, homeownership, Ontario Renovates, rental assistance and housing support services.
- In terms of the **Meadowbrook Development** – Rent Supplement Allocation, the City of Windsor has committed an annual rent subsidy of \$240,000 from 2022-2028 dedicated solely to the Meadowbrook development
- The annual funding will begin on occupancy of the units estimated to be August 2022.
- This funding will bridge the gap between the market rental rates of approximately 40 units and the tenant rental rates. The allocation will be funneled from the Community Housing Renewal Strategy funding allocation.
- Funding to continue to support **Housing First for Youth** (HF4Y) workers.

Councillor McKenzie advises that the Standing Committee determined the need for additional supports to be provided for the wrap around services. In terms of the five percent available for operational supports, asks if that could be legislatively increased.

D. Cercone responds that a level of advocacy would have to happen with the Ministry because if we submit a request for ten percent, it would be rejected as the guidelines state that the maximum is five percent. Our funding is a use it or lose it proposition and funding allocations must be within the fiscal year. We do need additional operating funds – we are experiencing millions of dollars in deficits around operating funds, which was identified to Council in 2022 as a pressure.

J. Tanner provides an update relating to the Housing with Supports Program as follows:

- The **Housing with Supports Program** provides subsidy payments for approximately 550 residents who live in nineteen different homes across the Windsor-Essex region.
- City Administration engaged with a consulting firm to evaluate the Housing with Supports Program in Windsor and Essex County with the goal of transforming the system to align with industry best practices and the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- The project is intended to improve outcomes for current and future residents by establishing a program that meets their needs and empowers them to move along the housing continuum toward more independent living.

K. Goz provides an update relating to the 2021 Windsor Essex Coordinated Point in Time Count as follows:

- In March 2021, the City implemented the third Coordinated **Point in Time Count**.
- Highlights from the 2021 Count include:
 - 250 people are experiencing homelessness – 198 single adults, 14 families with 26 dependent children and 13 youth
 - Gender – 71% male, 27% female and 1% non-binary/gender queer
 - Forty-two percent of the people experiencing homelessness need some time-limited assistance to get back into stable housing. 35% need highly intensive supports to stay housed. The remaining need a service delivery system that empowers them to end their own homelessness. Homelessness has grown increasingly chronic (six months or more in the last twelve months)
 - 75% single adults
 - 86% families
 - 77% youth
 - 22% of people identify as indigenous
- Data related to the **By-Names Prioritized List** is provided.
- **Housing Hub Consultation** – In July 2021, Council approved Administration to engage with a consultant to collect, evaluate and analyze information as well as conduct community, participant and stakeholder consultations throughout the service area to complete a proposal for a Housing Hub (also known as H4).

- A final report will be presented to City and County Councils that will include a Community-Informed Feasibility Study and “What We Have Heard”.

Moved by Councillor K. McKenzie, seconded by Mayor G. McNamara,

That City Council **BE REQUESTED** to call upon Senior Levels of government to increase support for housing retention policies including but not limited to the creation of long-term sustainable funding envelopes to increase supply and to promote successful tenancies through increased supports and supportive housing programming and that this resolution **BE FORWARDED** to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Housing, all local MP’s and MPP’s, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus and the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus.

Carried.

4.3 Updates from Member Organizations

F. Coughlin, Habitat for Humanity provides an update relating to their 3D printed homes project and the CMHC funded projects as follows:

- Furniture bank renewals – Organizations that receive furniture donations can be picked up by the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store and will be provided with gift cards, which can be given to their clients.
- Currently in a soft launch phase of a repair program (due to COVID) but will be going public in July 2022. A repair crew will be available to do some pilot work on certain properties.
- CMHC Funding – Habitat for Humanity Canada has a large envelope of CMHC funding, so the more they can bring to Windsor-Essex, the better.
- CMHC requested that Habitat for Humanity take on the 3D printed homes project in partnership with the University of Windsor, which will be a great innovative experiment. Four homes will be built in Leamington.
- Habitat for Humanity is essentially a builder and mortgage company.
- There is \$50,000 pre-approved for every house they build with CMHC and there are opportunities for partnership.
- Want to take people living in a rent geared to income and to transfer them to a mortgage geared to income, which allows them to have equity in that home. In the past year, they have permanently housed 19 individuals.
- Working with the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure that they come in ten percent less than the appraisal values but it does not matter because the family will never pay more than 25% of their income.
- The houses are mortgaged on an annual term, so every year they meet with the family, look at their income, ensure they are paying their property taxes, and have insurance on their home.
- The mortgage payments go strictly to building more houses.

In response to a question asked by J. Steele regarding if the \$50,000 is on this grant/loan, F. Coughlin responds that it is a forgivable loan, which means they are tied to their homeownership model for that funding so they can be creative. The houses have to stay affordable for twenty years and after that, the loan is forgivable.

4.4 Consumption and Treatment Services Site (CTS) – 628 Goyeau Street

The Chair remarks that there have been negative comments from surrounding businesses relating to the Consumption and Treatment Services Site. For the most part members of HHAC felt this was a necessary tool to assist people in crisis. She adds that City Council at its meeting held January 17, 2022 approved the CTS site at 628 Goyeau

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:32 o'clock a.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR