CRD

Making a difference...together

Minutes of a Meeting of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee
June 27, 2019, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Room 488, 625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC

PRESENT: Malcolm McNaughton, Kerrianne Coady, Candace Koo, David Corey, Lindsay Milburn, Bruce Anderson, Bill Brown, Sharon Hvozdanski, Jarret Matanowitsch, Jim Hartshorne, Kelly Roth, Kathy Whitcher, Leah Strohmann (alt. for Matthew Baldwin)

STAFF: Kevin Lorette, Christine Culham, John Reilly, Maia Kerr (recorder)

REGRETS: Danella Parks, Kaye Melliship

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kevin Lorette welcomed all RHAC members and introductions were facilitated around the table.

2. Selection of the Chair

Kevin Lorette called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) for 2019.

David Corey was nominated and the nomination was accepted.

Nominations were called for a second and third time and as there were none, nominations were closed. David Corey was declared Chair of the Regional Housing Advisory Commission (RHAC) for 2019.

Kevin Lorette called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) for 2019.

Kerrianne Coady was nominated and the nomination was accepted.

Nominations were called for a second and third time and as there were none, nominations were closed. Kerrianne Coady was declared Vice-Chair of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) for 2019.

David Corey assumed the Chair and welcomed members.

3. Definitions of Affordable Housing

John Reilly explained that the CRD is looking for feedback and guidance on how best to support municipalities and electoral areas and define affordability. A spreadsheet was included in the meeting package summarizing municipal and electoral area affordability definitions in the region.

Candace Koo (CMHC) introduced the CMHC Housing Solutions Booklet. Affordability requirements (page 6) and flexibility for development seed money were noted. A discussion followed regarding the effect of rapid rent increases when affordability definitions are based on median rent.

Malcolm McNaughton (BC Housing) presented on BC Housing's definitions of affordable housing. He noted that there are many different types of affordability within a community and that depending on which program you target and tool you use, there are different definitions.

Discussion ensued regarding the following:

- Perpetual affordability – rent increase restrictions result in increasing affordability the longer a tenant remains in a specific unit regardless of the affordability term length
- Esquimalt's municipal plan doesn't define affordability because it is context dependent (but does reference BC Housing's "Housing Income Limits" (HILs) which take into account market, geography and household size)
- While a single definition of affordable housing would help with coordination, RHAC members agreed that it was not a realistic goal
- The spectrum of how affordable housing is defined needs to broaden and a single definition is likely no longer useful to planning and program implementation
- Council members often have differing ideas of which part of the housing spectrum should be prioritized
- Different tools are required to support different types and levels of affordable housing
- Municipalities and electoral areas are not currently coordinating how to address affordable housing which has resulted in an inconsistent approach
- Helping municipal politicians understand the programs and bigger picture should be a priority
  - CRD could play a role in coordinating aligned messaging for municipal councils*
- CRD currently is developing a program to work with private developers to facilitate affordable rental/ownership (Housing Agreement Program)
  - CRD will bring a description of the program to RHAC for feedback
- There needs to be caution exercised when mandating deep affordability without funding or cost reduction options to help developers achieve affordability targets – this could have a significant impact on development applications
- When municipal and electoral area approaches differ significantly it can impact development
  - RHAC could help support planning that has the potential to see approaches that are better aligned throughout the entire region
  - RHAC could develop a guiding document resource to help municipal partners
  - CRD will present the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) at next meeting
- It is important to distinguish between municipal Inclusionary Housing policies and Affordable Housing Strategies
- The City of Victoria is developing an updated Affordable Housing Strategy with specific affordability definitions and clear targets
  - Details will be shared at the next RHAC meeting

4. Roundtable – Sharing of priorities by each RHAC member

Summary of Priorities:

- Affordable housing is a council priority in many municipalities
- Overall supply of housing in the CRD needs to be increased and must include affordable units
- Indigenous, workforce and youth/student housing are priorities
- There are a number of student housing initiatives underway and it would be helpful to get a sense of what is happening and what continuing need there is in this area
- Increasing construction prices mean municipalities need to find ways to work with developers through partnerships, incentives, streamlining the municipal processes, etc.
- Many municipalities are looking at increasing density and housing infill
- Coordination at the regional/sub regional level is necessary
- Inclusionary housing is one of many tools to address affordable housing
- Most developers are concerned that families will not be able to afford houses

5. **Next Meeting**   September 26, 2019 from 2:00-4:00 pm

- Speakers from UVIC and Camosun College housing programs will be asked to speak at the next meeting about their programs and ongoing housing needs

6. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.