

Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee Agenda

Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u> The Chair will open the meeting and provide a land acknowledgement.	
2. <u>INTRODUCTIONS</u>	
3. <u>CHANGES TO THE AGENDA</u> Additions or deletion of agenda items.	
4. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	
4.1 February 22, 2023	3
5. <u>REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS</u> Staff and guest reports and presentations for information, discussion, and/or action	
5.1 Homelessness Action Strategy Implementation Work (Anti-stigma Campaign & How to Make a Difference Brochure)	
5.2 Overview - Affordable Housing Policies and Procedures: A Cheat Sheet	
5.3 Hey Neighbour Collective - Co-creating Social Wellbeing Design for Multi-unit Housing	
6. <u>NEW BUSINESS</u> Items added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.	

7. END OF MEETING

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

No further meetings are scheduled.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance

Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy*	Chair
Councillor Tasha Henderson*	Council Representative
Jessica Gillis*	Alternate Chair/Community Member
Dalia Al Houseini*	Community Member
Bruna Maciel*	Community Member
Louise Sallai*	Representative, BC Housing
Betina Wheeler*	Representative, Homelessness Coalition Society

ABSENT:

Tanis Anderson	Representative, School District 40
Viramit Bajwa	Community Member
Avnil Chand	Community Member
Blaine Kane	Representative, Indigenous Advocacy or Social Service Organization
Jayne Ogundehinde	Community Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Claudia Freire*	Housing and Social Planner
Anur Mehdi*	Social Planner
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:37 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions took place.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 September 6, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the September 6, 2022 Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisor Committee meeting be adopted.

Carried.

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

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 New BC NDP Housing Plan Overview

Anur Mehdić, Social Planner, shared a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the BC NDP's new Housing Plan.

In response to questions from Committee members, Mr. Mehdić and Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided the following comments:

- Different levels of government have their own definitions of housing affordability. For the City of New Westminster, affordable housing means you would not pay more than 30 percent of your income to housing;
- Leading up to the development of the City's Renovation Bylaw, staff started to track vulnerable rental buildings so there is already a good foundation for when initiatives such as rental housing acquisition starts to roll out;
- Meetings are taking place to look at affordable homeownership through affordable housing;
- Much of the City's current policy work addresses the housing crises through affordable rentals;
- At a future meeting, staff can provide information regarding the amount of seniors housing located in the Fraserview area and if working with Habitat for Humanity would be a viable option for the City;
- It is hoped that more affordable housing proposals like the Lu'ma Development on Sixth Street which, came together as a result of multiple partners working together, will come forward in the future; and,

- The City's updated Inclusionary Housing Policy, which will speak to affordability, will be brought to the Committee in the future.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- The four bedroom, adult oriented, townhouses near the Glenbrooke Ravine could provide a lot housing if they were eligible as rental housing acquisitions;
- Adding more Co-op housing options in the City may be beneficial;
- The City of Coquitlam successfully worked with Habitat for Humanity on city-owned land projects that, at the time, met ambitious affordable initiatives;
- The Housing Plan offers more than what we have seen before; however, it still has some weak spots and needs to address affordability;
- The removal of strata restrictions on rentals may attract speculators and result in undemocratic stratas and renovations. The Strata Act should be updated to address those issues;
- The Provincial Government should provide more support to help municipalities reach their affordable housing targets;
- There are questions around the rental acquisition fund regarding the right of first refusal and whether or not the units would be subject to the Residential Tenancy Act; and,
- Affordable housing initiatives need to be supported to assist immigrants, newcomers, and those in transition who may not be employed or have enough money in their bank accounts to secure housing.

5.2 Community Action Network (CAN) - Success in Collaborative Public Engagement

Anur Mehdic, Social Planner, shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Community Action Network (CAN) and collaborative public engagement.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Mr. Mehdic advised that, as part of the City's Downtown Livability Plan, staff are working with businesses with respect to the area's unsheltered population, and noted that the Downtown Livability page on the City's website provides regular updates on the Downtown Livability Plan which includes business support and outreach.

Betina Wheeler, Homelessness Coalition Society Representative, advised that, amongst other things, CAN leaders have been involved in various food security initiatives, were instrumental in the development of Homelessness Action Week, and assisted in facilitating an event at Douglas College. She also noted that two

CAN leaders continue to participate on the City's Community Engagement Working Group, which will soon be working on an anti-stigma campaign.

Mr. Mehdic reviewed the Tamarack Institute's case study titled, "Transforming Systems Through Live Experience" which highlights the power of the Community Action Network in New Westminster. This document was included in the Agenda Package.

5.3 Downtown Livability Initiatives

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, shared a PowerPoint presentation which provided information regarding Downtown Livability Initiatives.

Councillors Henderson and McEvoy noted that this work is immense, and that it is surprising to hear from many community members that they are unaware of the Downtown Livability Plan and that more needs to be done to share this information with the public. They advised that it would be helpful if Council members had handouts to allow Council to share this information with the community.

In response to the issue of providing healthcare for the unsheltered population, Anur Mehdic, Social Planner, advised that he could bring this to the attention of his contact at Fraser Health.

Discussion ensued regarding additional affordable housing issues, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Elder housing for the LGBTQ+ community is lacking as there is only one in the Lower Mainland and many seniors housing facilities are run by religious organizations; and,
- Aging in place needs to be addressed.

5.4 Homelessness Action Strategy for 2023

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, shared a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the Homelessness Action Strategy for 2023.

Betina Wheeler, Homelessness Coalition Society Representative, noted that the Coalition's Community Engagement Working Group will help support the development of the anti-stigma program, the "How to Make a Difference" brochure, and the business award. She advised that the Working Group is comprised of Community Action Network leaders, service providers, and other community members with the goal of the three initiatives being developed by June, in time for Homelessness Action Week which takes place the week after Thanksgiving each.

5.5 ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund: Project Updates

Anur Mehdic, Social Planner, shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding project updates for the ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Mr. Mehdic noted that the retrofitting at Queensborough Community Centre will provide space for after school care which is the least kind of space available in the community.

Councillor Henderson shared that there is a multi-year contract for child care space at Skwo:wech Elementary School and that the New Westminster School Board worked with the Provincial Government to use the funding that would be for new child care spaces to renovate F.W. Howay Elementary School and École Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School to accommodate the spaces from École Qayqayt Elementary School and Fraser River Middle School. She noted that there would be no net gain of spaces which is unfortunate as it is challenging for families in the downtown area to get to those schools; however, the City is working hard with New Westminster Family Place to find them programming space in the downtown area.

5.6 Renewed Child Care Protocol

Anur Mehdic, Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the renewed Child Care Protocol.

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

- The Province is implementing long-term community investments run by public partnerships that would include school districts, local government, and non-profit organizations and which would prioritize projects that increase the availability of infant, toddler, and school-age child care;
- In order to understand overall child care requirements, the City and the School Board must work together and include the School Board's contribution of their child care requirements to the City's needs assessment;
- It was in staff's work plan for the next several years to update the 2019 Child Care Needs Assessment; however, this work was halted due to staffing challenges and the necessity to prioritize other social planning issues;
- Information regarding current and future child care space for children with disabilities will be sought from the City's Child Care Working Group which includes, amongst others, Fraser Health, the School District, and Kinsight; and,

- An update regarding child care spaces available for the full spectrum of disabilities and if any have been gained within the last 10 years, will be brought to the Committee at a future meeting; and,

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- A lot of time and effort went into establishing the neighbourhood learning centre and child care and it is very frustrating that they are now gone;
- Without new schools being built, there is concern that the Child Care Protocols will not be adhered to if the School Board prioritizes the growing number of students over child care in existing schools;
- It may be beneficial to include Fraser Health in the Child Care Protocols;
- When updating the City's Child Care Needs Assessment, it should be expanded to include other child care in New Westminster such as the Westminster Children's After School Society, not only School District data, in order to the most informed information;
- There needs to be a philosophical discussion with the School Board to determine if they are only providing child care by convenience until the space is needed as this may not be where the City wants to put its resources since it may not be a long-term solution for our child care needs;
- Before continuing to dedicate high level staff resources to more work with the School Board, which has already resulted in delayed developments, policy initiatives, and other city work including securing child care spaces in other areas of the City, we need to ensure that the goals of the work being done are worthwhile, authentic, and will result in positive outcomes;
- It will be important to know the location and number of all existing child care in the community when securing new child care spaces;
- Child care needs to be embedded in the City's discussions around economic development and when we are building complete communities as many people prefer to have child care located near their workplace in the case of an emergency;
- It would be beneficial for Committee members if the Child Care Needs Assessment began with a background of the processes and which entities work together with respect to child care spaces so that we can be better advocates for child care in New Westminster;
- Most rezoning initiatives such as child care and parks are at old, inaccessible locations, and the City still has a lot of child care spaces that are not accessible to a full range of disabilities. This needs to be discussed and worked on; and,

- The provision of child care spaces for children with disabilities would require the involvement of the Provincial Government as often children filling those spaces have a support person with them who is paid by the government.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

None scheduled.

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk