

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND CHILD CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **NOTES**

**Tuesday, November 9, 2021**  
**Electronic and in Meeting Room G**  
**Lower Level, City Hall**

#### **PRESENT:**

Ms. Andii Stephens	Community Member/Alternate Chair*
Ms. Tanis Anderson	Representative, School District 40*
Mr. Wes Everaars	Community Member*
Ms. Jayne Ogundehinde	Community Member*
Ms. Betina Wheeler	Representative, Homelessness Coalition Society*

#### **ABSENT:**

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	
Ms. Stephanie Erdelyi	Representative, Child Care Advocacy Organization
Ms. Jennifer Fane	Community Member
Ms. Briana Harris	Community Member
Mr. Blaine Kane	Representative, Indigenous Advocacy or Social Service Organization
Ms. Hortensia Moreno	Community Member
Ms. Iulia Sincraian	Community Member

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Ms. Claudia Freire	Housing and Social Planner
Mr. Anur Mehdic	Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Ms. Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk

\*Denotes electronic attendance

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### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Andii Stephens, Community Member and Alternate Chair, opened the meeting at 5:32 p.m. noting that quorum had not been achieved.

Ms. Stephens recognized that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples and acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She

recognized that, as a city, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

## **2. INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS**

This item was not addressed.

## **3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were no additions and/or deletions to the agenda.

## **4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **a. September 7, 2021**

**Procedural note:** As quorum was not achieved, adoption of the September 7, 2021 minutes was deferred to the next meeting of the Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee.

## **5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **a. Arts Empowerment Initiative: Call for Artist Mentor - Photovoice Project**

Claudia Freire, Housing/Social Planner, provided a presentation on the Arts Empowerment Initiative and the Call for Artist Mentor for the Photovoice Project which will highlight the importance of home, belonging, and community, through photography and storytelling. Ms. Freire's presentation outlined the following:

- The Call is open to up to five tenants each from Mazarine Lodge, 43 Hastings Street, and the Lookout Housing and Health Society accommodations;
- The background and goals of the Project; and,
- Central themes that will build on "Changing the Conversation," work being done by Dr. Elliot Rossiter, Philosophy and Humanities, Douglas College.

Ms. Freire asked Committee members for their suggestions and/or examples of other innovative ideas to expand and increase the discussion regarding affordable housing, living in poverty, and experiencing homelessness.

In response to a question from the Committee, Ms. Freire advised that the idea of the Project is to facilitate broader discussions about housing insecurity in the community, etc., and build compassion and a deeper understanding for when different affordable housing proposals come to the City.

Wes Everaars, Community Member, noted that when Lookout Housing and Health Society opens new sites such as shelters, they reach out to the various interest groups, Business Improvement Associations, and those interested in the service through a community advisory committee. He advised that as a project moves forward, a lot of advocacy work is done, including myth buster campaigns.

#### **b. Crisis Response Bylaw Amendments Update**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided a presentation on the Crises Amendment Bylaw Update in which the City will bundle three closely related projects in the interest of more quickly responding to urgent needs in the community and meeting current and near-future funding deadlines. The intent of these amendments is to enable more urgent and time-sensitive response efforts relating to the pandemic, recent fires and heat waves, the opioid crisis, the homelessness crisis, and any other future crises to be met more readily by successful adoption of bylaw amendments. The projects include:

- City-wide crisis response bylaw amendments;
- 60-68 Sixth Street Supportive Housing Project; and,
- 350-366 Fenton Street Affordable Housing Project.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Freire provided the following comments;

- Regarding the proposed new 52 supportive housing units at 68 Sixth Street, staff will provide information to the Committee regarding the process to select an operator for the site, once it is available; and,
- Staff leading the Sixth Street project will be made aware of the Committee's suggestion to address resident and business concerns in the downtown area.

In discussion, Committee members noted that engagement and education with the community with respect emergency and supportive housing needs and how it will ultimately benefit the community must be undertaken.

#### **c. Homelessness Action Strategy**

Anur Mehdi, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a presentation on the Homelessness Action Strategy to address the increase in homelessness in the City, which outlined the following:

- Homelessness population numbers;
- Factors that contribute to homelessness;
- The impact that homelessness has on organizations, businesses, and neighbourhoods; and,

- Current and future actions that the City is taking to address homelessness.

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

- Many lessons were learned from the Emergency Response Shelter at the Massey Theatre which had to be moved to the Cliff Block, including supports that need to be in place;
- A report regarding 68 Sixth Street will be going to Council on November 15, 2021, with the goal of having the project completed in 2022;
- The free-standing modular toilets would be located in accessible spots where those most likely to use them congregate, such as Downtown, but also in consideration of the availability of underground services for installation of the washrooms. Additionally, underutilized washrooms at SkyTrain stations may also be made more available;
- After-hours access to parks washrooms has been identified as a possible opportunity to provide additional washrooms options; however, overnight security would have to be implemented at these sites. This opportunity will be brought to the Engineering and Parks and Recreation Departments for further investigation;
- Community Action Network (CAN) leaders with living and lived experience with poverty and homelessness, as subject matter experts are compensated for their work at a living wage level;
- Provision of an emergency shelter on the lower floor of the old Army and Navy store located at 502 Columbia Street is being worked on with BC Housing. The facility would be run by the Lower Mainland Purpose Society; and,
- The City continues work to provide 52 supportive housing units at 68 Sixth Street.

In response to staff's request for feedback on the Homelessness Action Strategy, Committee members noted the following:

- Simple pieces of infrastructure need to be added and/or increased such as public trash cans since it can be very hard for people to find receptacles for rubbish disposal;
- The approach being taken to include CAN graduates to engage with the unsheltered population is a great way to interact with and get feedback from people; and,
- It is important to engage with people to find out which programs are working for them and which are not, as well as to include the Police in this process from a community engagement aspect.

#### **d. School Age Child Care in Queensborough**

Anur Mehdic Housing/Child Care Planning Analyst, provided a presentation on School Age Child Care in Queensborough including information about the creation of a COVID-19 Child Care Working Group sub-committee to explore options for school-age childcare spaces in Queensborough.

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

- Parental work hours may be different now than pre-COVID, necessitating the need for irregular childcare hours;
- The development at the Quay, which is still in the discussion stages, includes a large childcare aspect;
- A recent successful rezoning that allowed for up to 37 childcare spaces in an existing single detached house may pave the way for more group childcare applications in single family neighbourhoods ; and,
- Child Care Benefits information could be shared through the COVID Task Forces' weekly email, and brought back to a future meeting of the of the Affordable Housing and Child Care Advisory Committee as there is some confusion with other benefits and resources.

In response to staff's request for feedback on childcare in Queensborough and city-wide, Committee members noted the following:

- It is concerning and frustrating being on one or more childcare waitlists and not knowing where you are on the list(s) or how long the wait will be; some parents may not add their name to a waitlist if they think there is no point to it;
- Additional information that could be sought out in a survey for parents could include:
  - How many childcare waitlists people are on as this may increase the accuracy of the numbers;
  - The specific needs of immigrant families and those that care for kids within their families;
  - Times needed for childcare that may be outside of regular hours;
  - Families that moved to a specific catchment area in order to have access to childcare; and,
  - If the lack of access to after-school care has affected parental work schedule and/or availability, particularly that of single parents.
- Childcare hours are being shortened due to lack of staff who should be better compensated for their work given the education they have and the expectations that are upon them;

- It would be beneficial for the City to have a centralized daycare waitlist implemented for ease of access to information;
- There is concern regarding the lack of childcare available in more densely populated neighbourhoods such as Downtown and Sapperton;
- A topic for further discussion could be affordable housing and childcare impacts on children living in poverty. This could be looked at in tandem; and;
- Information must be shared with parents regarding the Child Care Benefit as many do not know what they are qualified for.

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

There were no items.

#### **7. END OF MEETING**

On MOTION, the meeting ended at 7:14 p.m.

#### **8. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

To be determined.