



Making a difference...together

Minutes of a Meeting of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee

June 29, 2022, 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)

PRESENT: Luke Mari, Kirsten Baillie, Lindsay Chase, Nadine Kawata, Ross Soward (on behalf of Andrea Hudson, Victoria), Bill Brown, Kathy Witcher, Danella Parks

STAFF: Don Elliott, Melanie Hope, Emily Sinclair, Jay Douillard, Maia Kerr (recorder)

REGRETS: David Corey, Kerriann Coady, Brian Green, Alita Tocher, Don McTavish

Meeting called to order at 2:02 pm.

1. Territorial acknowledgement

Chair Nadine Kawata offered a territorial acknowledgement of the Indigenous communities in the Capital Region.

2. Welcome and approval of Agenda

Chair Nadine Kawata welcomed all Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) members. Chair Nadine Kawata recognized Melanie Hope for her contributions to RHAC and wished her well in her upcoming change of position. Congratulations were extended to Lindsay Chase who is transitioning from View Royal to Director of Planning for Saanich.

Motion to add the Transit Indicator Report Presentation to agenda.

MOVED by Lindsay Chase, **SECONDED** by Danella Parks.

That the agenda be approved with the addition of the Transit Indicator Report Presentation.

CARRIED

3. Approval of April 7, 2022 Minutes

MOVED by Lindsay Chase, **SECONDED** by Luke Mari.

That the minutes from the April 7, 2022 RHAC meeting be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Business Arising

- Letter to the Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) from RHAC chairs requesting detailed spatial data for committees' review.
 - DPAC received the letter in June and Jay Douillard will present data to RHAC.
- CRD to investigate interest from Indigenous community partners in participating in a RHAC meeting to create opportunities for shared learning and partnerships to better address the housing needs of Indigenous people in the capital region.
 - Melanie connected with Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi from ACEH who is interested in collaboration and has agreed to present at the October RHAC meeting.
 - Melanie asked whether RHAC members would like a second presenter such as AHMA for the October meeting – RHAC members in favour of a future presentation.

5. Topics for Discussion:

- **Transit Indicator Report – Presentation by Jay Douillard, CRD Research Planner**
 - Presentation provided updates on regional growth and transportation indicators. At the request of the Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC), DPAC reviewed more detailed spatial data on the relationship between the frequent transit network and recent net new dwelling units. Additional information was provided on the relationship of population density, the number of children to both the frequent transit network and places meeting the RGS's active transportation goals.
 - Questions and Discussion:
 - *How is frequent transit defined by BC Transit?* 15 min headway through peak hours of day; and within 400 meters of transit stop (measuring the actual walking distance not as the crow flies / direct line).
 - *What can we do as a committee?* Kathy Witcher suggested RHAC members be more active in finding out what policies municipalities are working on and helping to push these policies forward via advocating and lobbying (e.g., Victoria's missing middle).
 - Emily Sinclair confirmed that with the upcoming five-year review, this is a good time to investigate what the policies are and look at how you would like to receive information such as the Transit Indicator Report.
 - *How could RHAC help the CRD to have a more active role regionally for transportation?* Luke Mari suggested creating a score card for weighting scores of projects that are near transit or asking developers to contribute to transit infrastructure if they build in areas without existing transit.
 - Lindsay Chase noted that it is challenging to plan for future using dated data.
 - *Could CRD compare effect of vehicle ownership?*
 - Jay Douillard confirmed it is likely possible, but isn't prepared yet.
 - Review of more detailed spatial data on the relationship between vehicle ownership and recent net new dwelling units to be added to Forward Looking Agenda for consideration as future agenda item.
- **Housing Agreement Program (HAP) – Melanie Hope, Manager HIP**
 - Melanie Hope provided brief program overview, explaining that the HAP has been an official affordable ownership and rental program for about 3 years but has administered below-market home ownership units for the last 15 years with the Dockside project.
 - Currently have agreements for 89 units with more in progress; each project is unique.
 - Planning phase can be extensive; CRD recoups costs with an administrative fee.
 - Once the covenant is registered, CRD's work begins again with first sales or rentals.
 - CRD is currently declining rental projects but looking to expand program and increase capacity for administration of rentals.
 - CRD is inviting RHAC feedback (see drafted Scope of Services attached to meeting invite).
 - CRD is wondering whether unified agreements would make more sense administratively.
 - Discussion ensued:
 - Bill Brown – Esquimalt supports growing this program and increasing capacity for rental.
 - Lindsay Chase – View Royal did this independently and would have loved to have CRD's help; better regional information regarding defining affordability is needed.
 - Ross Soward – City of Victoria has entered into 7 or 8 housing agreements recently. Good role for the CRD which compliments City of Victoria's Housing Strategy. Could be scaled to be self-sustaining.
 - Luke Mari – Income threshold tempers more than the below market price (lower income threshold forces buyer to have a bigger deposit, while a higher income threshold captures bigger audience). It is important that program takes timing into consideration; process to finalize and approve agreements needs to be expedited.

- Don Elliott explained that because these agreements are tied to bylaws, they currently require board approval. CRD considering asking Provincial Government to change requirements so that HAP units could be added to the list of targeted affordable housing and not require a lengthy bylaw process.
 - Luke Mari asked why the CRD needs its own agreement when municipality also has an agreement (i.e. could it be run at a local level)?
 - Don Elliott: If CRD is going to be party to agreement we would need our own.
 - Lindsay Chase suggested agreement could be made at a local municipal level with CRD involvement contractual. Could CRD advocate to province that this added burden is working against stated interest to provide affordable housing?
 - Luke Mari emphasized that the HAP program is exceptional and commented that he prefers to sell HAP units after presales when buyers can move right in.
 - Nadine Kawata – Saanich has benefited from and supports this program.
 - Emily Sinclair reiterated that joint advocacy is very effective; alignment in language when talking with different municipalities is a good idea.
- **Opportunities for engagement with Provincial Housing Minister – Kathy Whitcher**
 - UDI has been meeting with Minister Eby and have found him to be very receptive to hearing from and receiving feedback from groups like the RHAC.
 - Kathy Whitcher thinks the RHAC could utilize this connection by communicating with the Minister regarding needs in our community.
 - Discussion ensued:
 - Don Elliott suggested RHAC consider bringing forward red tape reduction initiatives such as legislative changes that could support administration of housing agreements
 - Bill Brown suggested RHAC put together list of ideas and topics to discuss with Minister Eby, for consideration at next RHAC meeting.
 - Lindsay Chase suggested RHAC invite Minister Eby (or a designate) to part of a meeting.

6. Review of mandate and issue topics for future meetings

- Affordability: There are several different ways to define affordability. Discussion of benefit of working to develop a common definition for the region.
 - Emily Sinclair is very supportive of this topic for discussion since in her policy area she sees questions about how affordability thresholds vary for different people. Affordable housing differs from housing affordability, and we need to unpack and attach policy language and structure to it.
 - Bill Brown noted that RHAC discussed this question years ago.
 - CRD to review past minutes and distribute to RHAC members to support future discussions.
 - Lindsay Chase agreed this is a critical topic. When talking about community plans and zoning, clear definitions make implementation easier. Conversation should include DPAC.
 - Emily Sinclair suggested this could be added to fall DPAC agenda.
 - Nadine Kawata confirmed Saanich is also looking at this question.
 - Ross Soward reiterated that regional perspective is important since the housing market doesn't stop at municipal borders.
 - Luke Mari noted that improved transportation and the associated cost savings should be factored into definitions of affordability.

Kirsten Baillie left the meeting at 3:37 pm.

- Actions:
 - CRD to add review of more detailed spatial data on the relationship between vehicle ownership and recent net new dwelling units to Forward Looking Agenda.
 - CRD to initiate email chain amongst RHAC members to identify possible issues and/or topics to discuss with Minister Eby.
 - CRD to review past minutes for discussions related to defining affordability and distribute to RHAC members to support future discussions.
 - CRD to prepare draft letter to Minister Eby for review by RHAC at next meeting.
 - CRD to include October RHAC meeting agenda item to review and approve discussion topics and approach for inviting Minister Eby to a RHAC meeting, including draft letter. RHAC to consider contacting Minister Eby after the fall municipal election.
 - Don Elliott noted that coming out of an election the political boards/councils may prefer to be the ones to reach out to the minister. Alternatively, RHAC could invite Ministry staff, such as a Deputy Minister.

Lindsay Chase left the meeting 3:43 pm.

7. Roundtable

RHAC members did not share any news or updates.

8. Adjournment

MOVED by Bill Brown, **SECONDED** by Kathy Whitcher.

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.