

**MINUTES OF THE
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 19, 2022**

1. Ryan Moen called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Committee Members: Ryan Moen (Co-Chair)
Alieda Blandford
Carrie Chapple
Heather Kirkham
Leslie Robinson
Neha Cradle
Ramya G N Reddy
Stefanie Hardman
Trevor Premack

Regrets: Yuka Kurokawa (Co-Chair)
Azmina Janmohamed
Councillor Andrew

Councillors Present: Councillor Potts

Staff Present: Andrea Hudson – Assistant Director, Community Planning
Rory Stever – Staff Liaison, Tenant Assistance Planner
Lauren Klose – Senior Planner
Ross Soward – Senior Planner, Housing Development
Ayla Conklin – Planning Secretary

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Trevor Premack, that the April 19, 2022 Agenda be approved.

Discussion:

- Is item 4. Village and Corridor Planning relevant to rental housing? Request to amend this item to 45 minutes and allow time to discuss the Shift Initiative.
 - The Shift Initiative will likely come to RAC next month but is not prepared to be presented today. The Village and Corridor Planning report will be presented to Council in May 2022.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Motion:

It was moved by Stefanie Hardman, seconded by Trevor Premack, that the March 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Village and Corridor Planning

Ross Soward and Lauren Klose, Senior Planners, presented information on three proposed plans for Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood neighbourhoods, that will create more housing capacity including rental housing.

The committee discussed:

Ross Soward and Lauren Klose, Senior Planners, presented information on three proposed plans for Hillside-Quadra, North Park and Fernwood neighbourhoods, which would create more housing capacity, including rental housing.

The committee discussed:

- Concern regarding the current practice that redevelopment proposals can eliminate below-market rental stock with market-rate units or no replacement rental units at all. What tools are being applied to preserve existing affordable housing and prevent tenant displacement?
 - The pressure on the rental market will be increased if the City does not include planning for this growth.
 - The City must continue to use all tools available to support all the sections of the housing continuum. People with low incomes suited for below-market units are created through partnerships with senior levels of government. Significant subsidies are required to offer this type of housing. Creating a more supportive land-use system is a way to support and incentivise affordable housing projects and increase housing stock. The recently-approved [Rapid Deployment of Affordable Housing Project](#) will move affordable housing projects through the development permit/rezoning phase at a much faster pace. These will likely be geared towards median-income tenants (35k-55k).
 - Increasing density geared towards rentals will allow the potential for increased affordability. This could be a tool rolled out to other neighbourhoods. Other tools include process and regulatory incentives. Local area planning is one tool for the City to support the overall rental affordability goals.
- How will people be able to access this type of housing?
 - Through the BC Housing registry waitlist.
- Although single-family dwellings are zoned for single occupancy, there are several that provide affordable rents for tenants. Concern there will be no net increase of affordable rental units. Densifying isn't the sole answer.
- There are many tenants who work that still cannot afford housing. Meanwhile, the City seems to be spending millions to house people facing homelessness and addictions. Do City Councillors have information on the comparison of housing costs for these groups?
 - Councillor Potts: For the most part, the City isn't spending money directly on housing. Many recent projects being developed, such as the purchase of hotels, have been provincial government initiatives (BC Housing) to support a variety of income brackets, including shelter rates and rent geared to income. There may be a perception that more housing is going to people who are unhoused and not enough to people with lower incomes. [The Victoria Housing Needs Assessment](#) and City's Housing Strategy show how the City and partners are advancing housing across the spectrum of needs, including for those with lower incomes.
- Has rental tenure zoning already been adopted in the City? How would this be implemented in other areas of Victoria?
 - Specific areas which meet objectives such as mobility, affordability and climate action goals, have been identified as potential rental tenure zoning through local area planning. Future areas could be identified by local area planning, or through other ways to implement the Victoria Housing Strategy, depending Council's direction.
 - Areas identified for rental tenure zoning would avoid displacement and protect good

existing rental housing. What is there today could stay there with the new zoning. Rental tenure zoning would add opportunity to add density to specific sites without rezoning, as long as it comes in the form of purpose-built rental and complies with applicable design guidelines.

- Is a recommendation desired for on-corridor or off-corridor density?
 - Staff are recommending a hybrid model, with on-corridor and off-corridor density, and would welcome the committee's feedback.
 - A member participated in the Villages and Corridors focus group in Fernwood and North Park. Neighbour feedback is supportive of the hybrid option. Renters have families and want to live on quiet streets as well.
- Concern that not enough is being done for seniors. Affordable rents are still priced much higher than the average senior receives on their pension, and people should not have to decide between housing or food.

5. Information Sharing

Rory Stever, Tenant Assistance Planner, and Andrea Hudson, Assistant Director of Community Planning, provided an update on the April 14, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting including Council approval of RAC Work Plan 2022.

City staff met with the Residential Tenancy Branch - Compliance and Enforcement Unit (CEU). Since the RPSOM bylaw has been adopted, they have received only one case. CEU has connected with bylaw services to investigate. Council directed staff to report back on the next steps for RPSOM enforcement in Q1 of 2023. Council directed staff to review what other municipalities are applying their version of an RPSOM bylaw. The next edition of the Connect Newsletter will include communications on tenant assistance. The first phase of web improvements is complete.

Councillor Potts, Councillor Liaison, provided an update on the resolutions passed at the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Convention. All motions were endorsed. Next option is to bring the motions to UBCM in Whistler on September 12, 2022. There is generally a lower attendance rate right before an election. If members are interested in this, a subcommittee can be formed.

The committee discussed:

- The RPSOM was adopted in January 2021 with an 18-month period to consult with tenants. The singular case that was referred to the CEU confirms that tenants are not aware of the bylaw. Request for a more comprehensive strategy to communicate the RPSOM bylaw.
- Request for the agenda to align with the work plan that was passed. Example: the work plan didn't include Local Area Planning – Villages and Corridors.
 - In February, the engagement plan came forward around website improvements, consultations and the Connect Newsletter. One of the key pieces is included in the work plan.
 - Clarification that the work plan does include Local Area Planning – Villages and Corridors. This project is going before Council shortly and RAC feedback is of great value.
 - Agenda items from members can be requested to staff a minimum of two weeks before the meeting. These items are considered emergent issues and balanced with other agenda items.

6. Advisory Committee Meetings

Rory Stever, Tenant Assistance Planner, provided a brief update on the status of meetings going forward including opportunities for in-person meetings.

The committee discussed:

- How can the public participate and observe a RAC meeting?
 - The general email is listed on the webpage. Anyone who reaches out will be provided with the link and participation requirements.

~~7. Parking Lot~~

8. Adjournment

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of April 19, 2022 be adjourned at 7:56 pm.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY