

**MINUTES OF THE  
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MAY 18, 2021**

**YUKA KUROKAWA CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:32 P.M.**

**Committee Members:** Alieda Blandford, Vanessa Hammond, Leslie Robinson, Yuka Kurokawa (Chair)

**Councillors Present:** Councillor Potts

**Staff Present:** Chloe Tunis – Tenant Planner  
Ayla Conklin – Planning Secretary  
Hollie McKeil – Housing Planner

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Request for an agenda amendment to discuss the recent committee member resignation.

**Motion:**

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa, seconded by Leslie Robinson that the May 18, 2021 agenda be approved as amended to include a member's resignation item before adjournment.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING MINUTES**

April 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

**Motion:**

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa, seconded by Leslie Robinson that the April 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. RAC 2019-2021 TERM IN REVIEW**

Hollie McKeil, Housing Planner, provided an overview of work underway or completed as well as key highlights from the RAC Work Plan 2019-2021, which was followed by a discussion period.

The committee discussed:

- Are there any updates on the recruitment of new committee members?
  - No update from Legislative Services yet – Chloe will connect via email if there are updates before the next meeting in June 2021.
- Does the checkmark in the presentation confirm it is completed?
  - The checkmark means the original outcome of the action listed is completed. In some cases, there is still work underway, including implementation and monitoring. Example: *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* is adopted, however there is still work underway

monitoring and engagement.

- There was a learning curve submitting AVICC motions. Workshopping beforehand and understanding the structure was important. Suggestion to start the process earlier rather than later - but overall was successful.
- Subcommittees were effective in moving work forward. Appreciation for staff support for subcommittee meetings to push projects forward.
  - Staff are happy to support.
- The *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* is a major accomplishment with the protections being so strong. Concern that promotion to tenants has not been fully completed.
  - This is under development and staff will provide RAC an update as outreach initiatives are underway.
- Can you provide a summary on the *House Conversion Regulations Bylaw*?
  - This bylaw allows for an older house to be converted into multiple units rather than a complete rezoning. It includes incentives to encourage rental tenure and heritage designation.
- Councillor Potts – What is the City’s role in the Rent Bank Pilot Project?
  - Direction from Council was to explore this project on a pilot basis with the administration by a third-party operator. Currently, housing policy staff attend regular meetings within an advisory group and the Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) is the operator. CSPC are considering bringing forward a request for additional support to municipalities throughout the Capital Region.
  - It was developed very quickly as an emergency response and no input was provided by RAC, although the CSPC presented to RAC for information.
- Did the Rent Bank Pilot Project secure long-term funding?
  - They did receive additional funding through Rent Bank BC to support them for the short term. They are still looking to secure long-term funding through the collaboration with municipalities and other funders.
- Request for discussion on the concept of Rent Banks before the CSPC makes another presentation to RAC or anything is put forward to Council.
- Can you provide a summary on the Rapid Supply of Affordable Housing action?
  - This action was directed by Council in June 2020 to improve housing security, in response to COVID-19.
  - A report is going to Committee of the Whole this Thursday led by Development Services to make process improvements to expedite the development of affordable housing. Depending on the direction from Council, it may or may not come to RAC for consultation.
- Can you provide a summary on the *Family Housing Policy* for the 2021 actions?
  - Councillor Potts – Incentivising larger units. An amendment to the Official Community Plan (OCP) that if family sized units are added to the development, an applicant can vary the OCP. There have been larger units being proposed at Council.
  - There is an insufficient supply of family housing in Victoria, and particularly rental housing that is suitable for families. This policy is geared to encourage larger unit sizes in apartments that are rental and strata. Part of this work includes social policy and design considerations to make buildings more family friendly.
- What is planned for Secondary Suites Expansion?

- This action will likely start after the Missing Middle Housing is implemented. It will consider a grant program to encourage new legal and accessible secondary suites as well as amend zoning bylaws to allow for secondary suites throughout the City.
- Currently, it is only permissible to have a single secondary suite or garden suite in the Single Family Dwelling zoning. It is not permissible in a townhouse, duplex or small lot.
- Missing Middle Housing – understanding from the committee that this project wasn't providing rental housing. Using RAC time to discuss private ownership housing is not of interest. Support for Secondary Suites actions.
  - Clarifying that the Missing Middle Housing project will likely predominantly create new stratified housing, however, there will also be opportunities for new secondary market rental housing, such as rented suites.
  - Request that in the future when staff bring projects to RAC, that they present information that is relevant to rental or affordable housing, for RAC's feedback, rather than making a presentation and telling RAC at the end of that likely no affordable or rental housing will be achieved.
- Request to look into whether RAC members can move into the Housing Policy Working Group if it is created in the future, once members are no longer part of the committee.
- Request for RAC to discuss homelessness issues in Victoria and advocacy for the City to take a proactive role in addressing homelessness Housing.
  - There is a report being prepared that reviews and makes recommendations for how the City should respond to homelessness and the hope is to bring some updates to RAC on this when it is brought forward in the near future.
  - Who is responsible for a City response to homelessness?
    - Staff advised there is no specific staff or department that is responsible for this, but rather there has been a coordinated response across several departments. Other municipalities have specific staff members or departments that address homelessness, and this is an opportunity that the City could explore.
    - There have been capacity limitations within the planning department. There have been some recent vacancies filled and new positions created, including the Tenant Planner, the Senior Housing Planner position and Senior Planner of Affordable Housing Development to support new affordable housing development. These positions are already taking on existing work plan demands.
    - Councillor Potts – The City has hired a consultant, Nicole Chaland to take a census of people living outdoors. RAC may be interested in the outcomes of this work. There is a new Social Planner position that I supported which may be able to help address homelessness. This position is a good start.
    - Recruitment is underway for the Social Planner.
- Request for the Tenant Engagement Strategy to be put on a future agenda, and for follow up to see how it is being applied to active projects.
- Appreciation for RAC and all progress that has been made.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENT TRACKER**

Chloe Tunis, Tenant Planner, provided information on tracking development applications. There is now the ability to receive notifications on developments in your area.

The committee discussed:

- This may be a tool for tenants to see what development plans are in motion relating to eviction notices. This could also be a tool to dispute a development that is not occurring.
- This is a tool for tenants to learn of new buildings coming as a rental opportunity in the future.

#### **5. RENTAL BUSINESS LICENSING BYLAW UPDATE**

Hollie McKeil provided a brief project timeline update. Early targeted stakeholder engagement is now complete, RAC provided input at four meetings and participated in the dedicated Have Your Say Project Page. Staff will be taking a report to Council in the next couple of months for next direction, and should direction be received to move forward on a bylaw, then RAC will have the opportunity to provide more comments.

#### **6. COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION**

Request for RAC to write a letter to Amy White to thank her for her commitment to RAC and to discuss the ways Amy has been affected. Discussion on the context for why Amy decided to leave the committee. The committee further acknowledged all the hard work and valuable input Amy has provided, and what a loss this is for the committee. RAC members will follow up outside of the committee meetings to complete a letter to Amy.

#### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

##### **Motion:**

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa seconded by Alieda Blandford the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of May 18, 2021 be adjourned at 7:53 P.M.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**