

MINUTES
MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
Monday, March 2, 2020 at 8:31 a.m.

Present: Mayor Haynes and Councillors de Vries, Mersereau and Plant
Staff: Sharon Hvozanski, Director of Planning; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Haynes called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: That the minutes of the February 3, 2020 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting be adopted."

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. Council Housing Strategy Terms of Reference

Director of Planning stated:

- Framework with elements of the sequence do this in the process about how we would move through completing the strategy.
- Looking for your feedback on some key issues in and around timing and phasing on engagement
- After this morning meeting, one of two things occur a) you could recommend that this move forward to be drafted in its full entirety and it be brought forward to Council as quickly as possible or b) you could ask us to revisit this committee again, we would take away your feedback and we would prepare a formal terms of reference document and bring it back to this committee. There are time realities associated with either of those options.

Manager of Community stated:

- Framework being presented, seeking committee feedback on the elements.
- Key elements are process timelines, engagement measures, and focus areas.
- Process for the strategy has been guided by Council direction from the Affordable Housing Policy from within the Official Community Plan (OCP).
- Many current and past initiatives that are incorporated:
 - Affordable Housing Policy in OCP (2008)
 - Ongoing housing infill and area planning initiatives.
 - Accelerated application processing for affordable housing projects
 - CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (2018)
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Saanich Affordable Housing Fund and CRD Regional Housing Trust Fund
 - CRD's Regional Housing First Program
 - Participation on CRD's Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC)
- Very important to distinguish the role of local government in the context of housing. Partnerships are going to be necessary:
 - The Provincial Government builds a range of affordable housing such as non-market

- and support housing, finances projects with affordable housing, and has the capacity to provide tenant support and market regulation.
- The Federal Government funds affordable and social housing projects, provides financial assistance through tax credits and exemptions, provides mortgage loan insurance and market regulation.
- Private developers provide new housing stock and affordable housing through amenity contributions and/or partnerships with non-profits or government
- Non-profits develop or partner with other to develop affordable housing, provide land for housing through leases, donation or below market value and manage affordable and supportive housing units.
- Framework proposal consists of a 10 year strategy with prioritized with 3 year actions within that strategy.
- Identified 5 focus areas:
 - Increase affordable housing
 - Support housing diversity & supply
 - Promote and protect rental housing
 - Reduce barriers to housing
 - Strengthen partnerships and build awareness
- Looked at recent experiences in Victoria (Phase 2), Vancouver, Toronto and Nanaimo.
- Other municipalities' experiences give some sense of techniques used for engagement, process lengths, and time frame. Victoria and Vancouver both have 3 year action plans as part of their 10 year strategy.
- The engagement processes have typically taken one year and include a high profile public event that is used to bring key stakeholders together and generate public input. Other techniques have supplemented the high profile public event.
- The strategy provides a clear sense of the community's future needs and demands, how things will change over time and how it can be addressed.
- Process considerations:
 - Focused on expeditious development of the strategy.
 - Housing Needs Report will be a useful tool for the process and will be before Council approximately late November 2020.
 - Ideally having the terms of reference before Council in April and then having the big kick-off event such as a forum, before summer.
 - Housing forum would be supplemented by broad public engagement and community strategy to receive community feedback.
 - Integrates information from Housing Needs Report in later stages of the process
 - Engagement based on IAP2 framework (inform, consult, involve) and builds heavily on models in other communities.
 - Ideally Council consideration of the strategy will take place in January 2021.
 - Trying to build a relatively fast-paced process while still allowing for meaningful public consultation.
 - This strategy will need to be a fairly nimble document considering the housing landscape changes very quickly so is subject to regular updates.
- Engagement approach:
 - Key stakeholder interviews
 - Housing forum
 - Two rounds of public engagement
 - Mayor's Standing Committee as sounding board
 - Open houses and targeted consultation
 - Website, online information & survey
 - Equity lens
- Housing forum
 - 1 or 2 day forum
 - Test a wide range of potential housing solutions, spark new ideas, and develop recommendations

- Council leadership and participation
- Speakers to provide context
- Invite a diverse group of stakeholders including non-profits, industry, developers.
- Facilitated workshops
- Budget
 - Primary costs associated with Housing Forum, public engagement, and data analysis
 - Develop detailed housing targets based on Housing Needs Report
 - Contingency to enable additional analysis/expertise if needed
 - \$120,000 recommended (\$500,000 available in Council Contingency for strategic Initiatives)
- There are process alternatives such as moving the Housing Forum to the Fall, having the primary engagement after receipt of the Housing Needs Report and Speeding up the Timeline, each with their own effects on the strategy.
- Summary of major milestones:
 - April to May: data analysis and targeted interviews
 - June: Housing Forum, broad public engagement and community survey
 - September/October: draft strategy for public review
 - November/December: Housing Needs Report to Council
 - February/March: Final strategy to Council
- Next steps:
 - Incorporate changes from today's meeting
 - Bring terms of reference report to Council for consideration and adoption (April 2020)
 - Initiate process

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the Committee recommend that the Staff report presented today with additional feedback as provided verbally by the committee be forwarded to the next available Council meeting."

CARRIED

Committee comments:

- The OCP statement used in the presentation would serve well as a precursor in this document.
- On the Housing Roles slide within the presentation, it may be useful to include the role of the Capital Regional District.
- Reinforcement of Cam's statement, this is about action, not just a strategy.
- The \$500,000 was set aside specifically for affordable housing.
- Suggest that the strategy moves forward to Council.
- Other municipalities have a Mayor's task force for issues such as this.
- There is interest in how staff are prioritizing the parallel initiatives and what challenges they are coming across
- We should be prepared for some of the actions coming out of the strategy to be in direct conflict with some of our other policies, i.e. density.
- A community advocate and development advocate would be beneficial as part of the guidance body whether it is a standing committee or a select committee.
- The select committee could be a guidance body, it could aid the standing committee, a check-in to the process depending on it's composition. The purpose of the task force would need to be determine first.
- Affordable housing is for all ages and all incomes.

In response to questions from the committee, the Director of Planning stated:

- The housing landscape and market are changing at such a rapid rate that there is a need to go back and revisit the strategy.
- Periodic spot proformas are performed as a general practice.
- Community amenity and inclusion rezoning make affordable housing more robust as a whole.
- The economic viability of projects are a priority when looking at proformas.
- When considering affordable housing, density is something that we consider along with amenity contributions.
- What we see in existing centres and villages is a reflection of the community and Council of the time that those centres and villages were created. It's contextual.
- We do have a rental conversion policy, a rent to strata, with conditions.
- When looking at process alternatives, if it was decided to hold the Housing forum in the Fall, it would cost an additional \$15,000 - \$20,000. Speeding up the timeline by replacing the Housing Forum with focus groups and targeted engagement could decrease costs by approximately \$30,000.
- A task force would take quite a bit of work to get up and running, they are often used as a sounding board, much like this Committee. Could add a layer of complexity.
- The service delivery review runs in parallel, the goal for April is to have the Terms of Reference to come before the Committee
- We have enough data to move forward comfortably and we will have a resolution of that data when we receive the information from the CRD to see that it all works together
- This process provides for engagement, gets experts at the table and also being mindful of expediting the process.
- Consideration should be given to asking Staff to include a section in a supplemental report to Council that speaks about options for a task force to facilitate Council's discussion in Chambers.
- We are expecting to bring this report before Council on April 20, 2020.
- There are pros and cons to task force, some of which are time and expense.
- The PowerPoint plus the committee's comments would comprise the draft terms of reference that will go forward to Council.
- The committee could see the draft terms of reference prior to it going forward to Council with the understanding that any amendments would not be captured. 1:25

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the staff report presented to the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Supply and Affordability on March 2, 2020 with additional feedback be forwarded to the next available Council meeting."

CARRIED

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That staff provide a report to Council that provides options for stewarding the housing strategy process".

The MOTION was then PUT and CARRIED

In response to questions from the committee, the Director of Planning stated:

- Some of the items listed in the "Items for Future Meetings" list are encompassed within the Housing Strategy but Planning could provide the Standing Committee with a high level overview.
- We will prioritize the Service Review TOR for the next meeting and the rest will come forward in the Housing Strategy.

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor Plant: "That staff forward the presentation on Housing Needs and Context with the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference to the next available Council meeting."

CARRIED

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Staff update on options to increase housing supply and affordability within neighbourhoods.
- Maintaining Existing Rental Housing in Saanich.
- Proforma.
- Discussion on evolving the Mayor's Standing Committee into a Task Force which would include external stakeholders. (April)
- Discussion of current incentives scan for rental stock owners.
- Six Month Update – Hiring of New Development Related Staff Positions (March).
- A Saanich Housing Strategy – Discussion Questions and Possible Resources.
- DCC reduction policy.
- How staff are prioritizing the parallel initiatives and what challenges they are coming across (April)
- Service Delivery Review TOR (April)
- Discussion around existing OCP policies that support affordable housing

NEXT MEETING

TBA

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor de Vries: "That the meeting be adjourned at 10:38a.m."

CARRIED

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY