

**MINUTES**  
**HOUSING STRATEGY TASK FORCE**  
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers  
Via Electronic Communications  
October 1, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chair de Vries and Vice Chair Harper

Staff: Cameron Scott, Manager, Community Planning; Gina Lyons, Senior Planner, Current Planning; Nadine Kawata, Planner, Community Planning; Alanna McDonagh, Planner, Community Planning; Matt Blakely, Planner Senior Planning Technician – Research and Analysis (Community Planning); and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

Facilitators: Lani Brunn, Lead Facilitator, CitySpaces; Julia Bahen, Facilitator, CitySpaces, Anna Zhuo, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Kevin Green, Facilitator, CitySpaces

Members: E. Dahli; S. Dutchak; C. Forester; C. Friesen; E. Gibson; G. Gillespie; M. Holland; R. Kelley; S. Leblanc; L. Mari; D. Posavad; J. Reilly; L. Spalteholz; K. Wiseman; V. Wynn-Williams

Regrets: J. Tarbotton

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#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair de Vries called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**MOVED by J. Reilly and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That the Housing Strategy Task Force suspend the rules of the Council Procedure Bylaw to allow for informal discussions on the topics as presented by staff and the facilitators.”**

**CARRIED**

#### **CHAIR’S REMARKS**

- A reminder was given that the meetings are being webcast. This meeting’s focus area is Increase Affordable Housing.

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS PRESENTATION**

J. Reilly, Manager, Capital Region’s Housing Corporation (CRHC), presented to the Task Force:

- The CRD reviewed the rental targets and demand estimates by income range from 2016 to 2038.
- CRHC has over 1400 units in seven municipalities. Of those units, 65% are rent gear to income, 30% are affordable housing, and 5% are near market rental units.
- The Regional Housing First Program (RHFP) was established to meet the chronically homeless individuals' needs in the regions. The CRD is taking a leadership role in establishing a sustainable financial model based on support from several partners and a mix of rent levels.
- The core housing need had fluctuated within the CRD from 13.5% in 2001 to just above 14% in 2016.
- The community factors that impact affordability are geography, economic structures and community demographics.
- The local market factors that impact affordability are speculation, supply, land availability, construction costs, property standards enforcement, public investment, policy/legislation and income versus supply escalation.

- A mix of housing type and tenure needs to be available to meet the full range of incomes, ages and housing needs across the spectrum.
- Historically, to address households in core housing need, government investment was developed to assist households living in the lowest income ranges and focused on marginalized or vulnerable populations.
- According to BC Housing, housing is considered affordable when no more than 30% of a household's gross income goes towards paying for your housing costs.
- Rent geared to income is a type of subsidized housing where the housing provider matches your rent to how much income you earn, so the household does not pay more than 30% of gross income on rent.
- Government-subsidized housing includes transitional housing and social housing. Non-market housing is affordable rental housing and affordable homeownership.
- There are many programs available through Senior Government funding.
- Municipal government support possibilities include zoning for increased density, parking relaxations, housing agreements, reduced development costs, inclusionary zoning, long term leasing of municipal land and land contributions.

### **POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Task Force members were separated into four break-out rooms, each containing a facilitator, to discuss the actions regarding affordable housing. The members then came back together to report back to the main group. The actions below were supportable by groups but with conditions:

- Modular housing options on municipal lands (parallel initiative in progress)
- Land acquisition strategy – suitable for affordable housing
- Co-locate affordable housing with community facilities
- Saanich Affordable Housing Fund
- Establish an action plan in response to homelessness
- Workforce housing – Group 4 did not recommend this action.

Groups were asked to provide suggestions for new actions:

- Prezone land and ensure consistency with local bylaws.
- Consider different approaches to community amenity contributions, rezoning, parking relaxations, sustain a development cost charges program, welcome house concept for refugees, lock-off suite guidelines
- Encourage acquisition and facilitation of land acquisition with partnerships, adopt a community plan, and land value capture tax.
- Density bonusing program, parking reduction for affordable units, consistency with the CRD

**MOVED by S. Dutchak and Seconded by E. Dahli: “That the facilitators, Saanich staff and Council representatives meet to discuss further opportunities for input and discussions from Task Force members on Focus Area #1 actions.”**

**CARRIED**

**MOVED by J. Reilly and Seconded by R. Kelley: “That the facilitators, Saanich staff and Council representatives report back to the Task Force with a document containing a summary of the feedback from all four groups regarding Focus Area #1 actions with the intent of a discussion, revisions and decisions to be made at a future meeting.”**

**CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE SECRETARY