

## **Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee**

Meeting held June 23, 2020 via Zoom Video Conference

A meeting of the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee is held this day at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom video conference there being present the following members:

Marina Clemens, Chair  
Councillor Kieran McKenzie  
Jessica Brunet  
Fiona Coughlin (arrives at 9:50 a.m.)  
Phil Dorner  
Kathy Hay  
Eric Hill  
Jim Steele  
Leigh Vachon (arrives at 9:50 a.m.)  
Joyce Zuk

### ***Regrets received from:***

Anna Angelidis

### ***Also present are the following resource personnel:***

Jelena Payne, Commissioner Development & Health  
Debbie Cercone, Executive Director of Housing & Children's Services  
Chris Aspila, Planner III  
Judith Binder, CMHC  
Jeannie Diamond Francis, County of Essex  
Kelly Goz, Coordinator, Housing Administration & Development  
Tina Moore, Coordinator, Housing Administration & Development  
George Robinson, Planner II  
Jolayne Susko, Coordinator, Housing Administration & Policy  
Jennifer Tanner, Manager Homelessness & Housing Support  
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 9:40 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

## 2. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

## 3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by E. Hill, seconded by Councillor McKenzie,  
That the minutes of the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee of its meeting held February 11, 2020 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.  
Carried.

## 4. Business Items

### 4.1 COVID-19 Updates from the Housing Department & HHAC Members

D. Cercone provides the following updates relating to COVID-19 and the Housing Department, City of Windsor:

Soon after the pandemic began, the provincial and federal government provided additional funding to assist the Housing Department in supporting its funded agencies and vulnerable populations.

The table below provides an overview of the initial funding streams and allocations.

Funding Stream	Funding Ministry	Amount	Date of Allocation	Purpose / Guidelines
Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF)	Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH)	\$3.7 million	Apr 1, 2020	To help social service providers such as emergency shelters, food bank, supportive housing to deliver their critical services, hire additional staff and find ways to promote social distancing and self-isolation. Falls under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) guidelines.
Canada's COVID Economic Response Plan	Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC)	\$1.47 million	Apr 1, 2020	To provide assistance to organizations attending to the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness during the pandemic.
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	n/a	\$34,000	Jun 3, 2020	To provide COVID-19 related supports to vulnerable populations.
COVID 19: Temporary Pandemic Pay	MMAH	\$307,235	Jun 12, 2020	To provide pandemic pay increase of \$4 / hour and lump sum payments (\$250 / month) for eligible employers and employees for the period

		(initial allocation, additional funding is expected)		of Apr 24 to Aug 13, 2020. Specific guidelines issued for this program. The City of Windsor, as Service Manager, will have to determine eligibility and administer this program.
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J. Tanner provides highlights of the programs that have been or are being supported by these COVID-specific funding allocations are listed below.

- Increased funding for **three emergency shelters** (Welcome Centre, Salvation Army and Downtown Mission) and **22 Housing with Supports Homes** in Windsor and Essex County to allow them to purchase PPE, ensure social distancing, hire additional staff, enhance cleaning protocols, adjust to meal services, increase security and transportation for staff during the Transit Windsor service suspension.
- Funding for **two daytime programs**, one at the Downtown Mission and the other at Windsor Water World, operated by the City, using redeployed City staff.
- Implementation of **COVID Isolation & Recovery Centres (IRCs)** to provide a safe place for people who need to self-isolate while they await COVID test results or recover from the virus. Initially, the IRCs were set up to support people experiencing homelessness, but this is currently being expanded to residents of Housing with Supports Homes, if they cannot safely isolate in place and agri-sector workers (i.e. migrant workers)
  - The first IRC was set up at a small motel with 29 rooms and operated from Apr 1 to May 20, 2020. The City leased the entire motel and provided management oversight, the Welcome Centre provided onsite service delivery, the Windsor Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) conducted on-site COVID testing and monitoring of symptoms, and the Windsor Essex Community Health Centre (weCHC) provided virtual medical assessments and monitoring.
  - The second IRC is set up in a larger hotel with 42 rooms, which began operations on May 1 and will continue operations until July 31, 2020. The City has leased the entire hotel and it operates much like the first IRC, but with the addition of on-site 24/7 nursing support from Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH).
  - Depending on the needs of the community, we may move to a smaller IRC with 10 – 15 rooms after July 31. Various locations are being explored and advocacy is being done to ensure the health sector continues to partner in the service delivery.
- Contribution to the **Families to Families gift card / food bank program**.

Despite the substantial levels of funding provided by upper levels of government, if the need continues and the above-mentioned programs remain in place as is, a deficit of \$1.2 million is projected by the end of 2020.

The Housing department has applied for additional funding through the federal government's Reaching Home program in an effort to switch from emergency response investments to permanent solutions including permanent supportive housing. We have not yet received a response on this funding request.

The provincial government has indicated that a second wave of funding may be provided under the SSRF program, but no details are known at this point.

J. Binder states there has been discussion regarding funding for rapid response due to COVID-19. CMHC is delivering on the commercial component for retail facilities that are suffering from rent loss. The best way to deliver to people that need it most whether it is for a short term or potentially longer, is to accelerate the construction of new housing units.

J. Zuk advises the homeless outreach workers funded by the City of Windsor have continued to operate during COVID-19 and there have been no disruptions in service. The MOST (Mobile Outreach and Support Team) van, a partnership between Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare, Canadian Mental Health Association, Family Services Windsor-Essex, Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario and the City of Windsor was suspended at the beginning of the pandemic. The suspension of the program at the beginning was due to it being uncertain how to have four staff members in and prevent a large number of people from congregating around the van. The partners have been working to bring the van back, but in lieu of working from the van, the outreach workers have been on the street and at the day program at Windsor Waterworld to assist. She commends the City of Windsor as at the beginning of the pandemic, when the restaurants were closed and there were no plans for the homeless individuals to get food, to use a washroom or to wash their hands, the City acted quickly not only to get the day programs running, but also to bring in port-a-potties.

E. Hill indicates his organization was able to maintain contact with their tenants through the telephone and to complete some applications by phone for the Keep the Heat Program. They were a contact for the University of Windsor as they had phone service and were able to continue to affect many emergency repairs.

L. Vachon reports they are grateful for the grant they received to assist with staff and for the security that dealt with the mental health population to keep people restricted from where they were going and monitoring to ensure they had hand sanitizers and practiced social distancing. She adds they have struggled where other organizations could look to directives, i.e. retirement homes of the long-term care act or with developmental services. Other than the municipality, they do not have a regulatory body that says at this unprecedented time this is what you should be doing. She notes there has not been a positive COVID-19 case in their facility with the staff or residents.

J. Steele indicates his organization has been in emergency mode only and some staff have been redeployed to assist in cleaning. New protocols have been developed and the wellness checks have been well received.

J. Zuk indicates one of the challenges they are working through is that a number of individuals they support applied for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) but do not meet the eligibility criteria. She notes they are assisting these individuals to return or repay the funds.

F. Coughlin reports volunteers from Habitat for Humanity along with Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario have been redeployed to sew masks (they have distributed several thousand masks in the community). They have been doing wellness checks on the homeowners and providing grocery delivery.

Councillor McKenzie notes that reference was made to a \$1.2M deficit within the housing sphere and asks for the primary driver. D. Cercone responds that the primary driver is the additional support put in place in the shelters and the housing with support homes. They have to contemplate the current service levels and make some adjustments. The \$1.2M is a projection based on current expenditures so, if no adjustment is made to their current service expenditures that is their deficit. If the Provincial and Federal Government provides additional funding, that would mitigate the difference.

Councillor McKenzie reports City Council decided to house the agricultural workers, to provide a service that no one else was willing to do. He adds that we are looking at the operators that were required to make the city whole by providing service and we are currently working on the framework and its parameters. He expresses concern that the operators will pass on the cost to the workers themselves and asks what tools do we have as a municipality to protect those workers from not having those costs passed onto them because the workplace is essentially unsafe.

J. Payne states the question posed by Councillor McKenzie can be raised at the IMS table. The sublease agreement to support agricultural workers at the Isolation and Recovery Centre has not been finalized. Once again, not to just ensure the protocols are followed, but there is a contract and the operators know legally they are responsible for covering any and all funds. She adds she will contact the City Solicitor to determine if a line with some additional language can be added to the agreement.

#### **4.2 Housing & Homelessness Master Plan 2019 Annual Report**

K. Goz provides the following overview relating to the Housing & Homelessness Master Plan 2019 Annual Report:

- Housing Services staff is currently drafting and working to obtain the data for the report and will work with Geomatics on the final layout

- HHAC members will receive copies of the draft version for feedback
- The 2019 Annual Report will include progress attained under the goals and strategies, as well as data on the identified targets. In addition, participant testimonials on how the programs and initiatives being delivered under the HHMP are having a positive impact on residents in Windsor Essex will be highlighted
- A number of strategies have been in progress or were enhanced / ongoing throughout 2019. Table 1 below details the progress made under the HHMP in 2019

Table 1: Progress under the HHMP (January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019)

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6	Goal 7	Total
Number of Strategies Not Started	3	0	1	3	3	0	5	15
Number of Strategies In Progress	6	0	7	2	2	3	2	22
Number of Strategies Completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Strategies Enhanced / Ongoing	2	4	2	0	1	1	3	13
<b>Total Strategies for HHMP</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>

Councillor McKenzie advises although the Housing & Homelessness Master Plan calls for 10,000 units in ten years as at this year’s end will have 150 units. He questions if the city is on track to meet 10,000 units in 10 years. K. Goz responds the city is looking for additional funding sources and she adds the goal of 10,000 units is not the sole responsibility of the municipality but is a “community plan”.

In response to a question asked by Councillor McKenzie, regarding if there are sufficient funds to reach the goal of 10,000 units, D. Cercone responds there is insufficient funding at this time.

J. Binder indicates there are leveraged opportunities for incentives, i.e. waiving development charges and she adds the COVID impact is a double-edged sword.

#### 4.3 Housing & Homelessness Master Plan

##### **Goal 1: Sustain and expand social and affordable housing supply Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)/Windsor Essex Housing Benefit (WEHB)**

T. Moore provides a synopsis of the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB and the Windsor Essex Housing Benefit (WEHB) as follows:

- COHB and WEHB Council Report presented for information purposes and approved by council June 1, 2020
- News release issued, communication emails to social housing providers, rent supplement administrators, community partners such as domestic violence shelters, legal assistance Windsor, Windsor Essex Alliance to End Homelessness.

The launching of this program was communicated through various Windsor Essex news channels.

- COHB launched in Windsor Essex County May 11, 2020
  - COHB funding
    - 2020-21 - \$755,473
    - 2021-22 – \$234,421 (incremental funding for new households)

Canada Benefit	Ontario	Housing	2020-21	\$755,473
Canada Benefit	Ontario	Housing	2021-22	\$989,894
<p><i>Note: The annual planning allocation will be the incremental funding available for new households approved in the Windsor Essex service area each fiscal year (i.e. \$755,473 in 2020-21, \$234,421 in 2021-22).</i></p>				

CHC is the designated administrator of this program - managing inquiries, applications and submission of applications to the Ministry of Finance through their ONT-TAXs system

- It is estimated this benefit may assist up to 160 households in the Windsor-Essex area
- The benefit is based on 30% of the applicant’s adjusted family net income (AFNI)
- The average market rents for this program are program specific and defined by MMAH
- As of June 22<sup>nd</sup> CHC has received approx. 600 incoming calls and close to 2000 emails (some enquiries are related to the WEHB)
- CHC has submitted 28 COHB applications to the Ministry of Finance
- WEHB launched in Windsor Essex County on June 1, 2020
- Municipally funded benefit
- \$250,000 for 2020-21
- CHC is the designated administrator of this program - managing inquiries, eligibility, applications, on-going eligibility and annual reviews
- It is estimated this benefit may assist up to 60 households in the Windsor-Essex area
- Benefits are offered in priority order in order of application date on our social housing wait list. This allows us to count these units towards our legislated service level standards.
- The benefit is based on 30% of the applicant’s adjusted family net income (AFNI)
- Average market rents are 90% of the MMAH CMHC AMRs for Windsor and Essex County

On June 8<sup>th</sup> CHC mailed out 89 letters with a response, deadline of June 29, 2020. So far, three people have responded to the letter, one application is ready to be processed and the other two have pending documentation.

We are monitoring the take up of both these programs closely to see if we need to request the use of our Alternate Average Market Rents for these programs, as we want to make every effort to take up the full funding allocation for these programs.

## Regulatory Changes

J. Susko succinctly provides the following comments relating to regulatory changes:

In September 2019, the province of Ontario filed new regulations that will improve waiting lists, create safer communities and simplify RGI rules and calculations. The amended regulations:

- Effective September 23, 2019 , gives community housing providers the authority to refuse to house a household based on previous eviction by the Landlord Tenant Board for a serious criminal offence i.e., N6 issued for illegal activity, for a period of five years from the eviction order
- Require applicants to prioritize their housing selection preference(s) and accept the first unit offered. Change came into effect on January 1, 2020 and must be implemented by January 1, 2021. Housing Services is working with the CHR to implement this change. All current waitlist applicants and new applicants must be notified of this change. Target date for implementation is November 1, 2020.
- Give Service Managers and housing providers more flexibility to efficiently manage tenant transfers. Consultation with social housing providers and CHR staff identified an interest in prioritizing the transfer of over housed RGI tenants. The process of transferring RGI tenants between social housing providers in Windsor Essex will begin by offering priority transfers to RGI households that are over housed. Prioritizing this group for transfers between housing providers will ensure tenants in social housing units in Windsor Essex are in the right size unit and housing resources are being utilized appropriately. Housing Services is working with the CHR to implement this change. Target date for implementation is November 1, 2020; and
- Change the rules that govern the calculation of RGI to make it more fair, easier for tenants to understand and simpler for staff to administer. RGI calculations will move to a simplified annual calculation of rent based on 30 percent of adjusted family net income (AFNI) as determined (where



possible) by the tenant's most recent income tax return. Extends the length of time that RGI households will be able to pay market rent before losing eligibility for RGI assistance from 12 to 24 months. In-year reviews will only be completed under certain circumstances such as, permanent decrease in income of 20% or more in household income, change to household composition, and tenants will no longer be required to report an increase in income between annual reviews. All tenants in full-time studies will now have their income exempt from the RGI rent calculation. The RGI changes come into effect on July 1, 2020 with the flexibility of to implement the change on July 1, 2021. The target date for implementation in Windsor Essex is scheduled for July 1, 2021.

Actions since the last HHAC meeting:

- Issued directive addressing the change to minimum rent was issued to Social Housing Providers and applicable rent supplement program administrators in April 2020. Increase in minimum rent from \$85 to \$129 on July 1, 2020 and indexing RGI minimum rent annually thereafter by the RTA's rent increase guideline, subject to a multi-year phase in (\$8/year) for RGI tenants paying less than the new minimum as of June 30, 2020.
- Developed a work plan with CHC and CHR to map out and assign action items, target completion dates and implementation dates.
- Housing Services staff worked with our legal services department to prepare revised Local Rules and RGI Verification Guidelines integrating the legislative changes noted above. These revised resources have been provided to CHC and the CHR for the purposes of working on next steps such as, creation of an RGI transfer list for current RGI tenants in Windsor Essex who are currently over housed, preparing to notify all households on the centralized waitlist of the reduction from three offers to one.
- Provided an update on the our progress and timelines for implementing the HSA Regulatory changes to our Social Housing Providers on May 20, 2020 at our Housing Provider Meeting held by teleconference

### **Administrative Goal 1 Subcommittee**

D. Cercone states the subcommittee was struck that included representatives from Planning, Housing Services and Finance. The subcommittee met in January 2020 and February 2020. Recommendations from the subcommittee were included in the Annual Plan.

### **Ontario Renovates – Social, Housing Repairs/Second Unit Program Update**

J. Susko advises the Ontario Renovates Social Housing Repair Program (OR-SHRP) is funded under Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy and is intended to assist Windsor and Essex County social housing provider(s) to rehabilitate units that require essential repairs, which preserve and extend the functional lifespan of the social housing supply and/or modify units to increase accessibility.

- The 2019-20 funding amount of \$2.3 M was distributed to 21 Windsor and Essex County social housing providers to address urgent and necessary repairs representing 1,100 social units to be repaired by December 31, 2020.
- We are pleased to announce the Ontario Renovates – Social Housing Repair Program (OR-SHRP) was released to eligible social housing providers on Monday, June 15, 2020. The funding allocations for eligible Windsor and Essex County social housing provider(s) is up to approximately \$2.7 M for 2020-21.

### **Ontario Renovates Second Unit Program Update**

- Launch was planned for release on March 30, 2020 but has been placed on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The application and the building of a second unit/additional dwelling unit require the involvement of the applicant's municipal building department for approval to build a second unit/additional dwelling units in accordance with their municipal by laws
- \$200,000 was being allocated from our Ontario Renovates Revolving Loan Fund to offer this program
- Maximum funding through this funding is \$25,000 per second unit/additional dwelling unit

### **Goal 2: Sustain and expand social housing that is linked with supports**

#### **Reaching Home**

K. Goz provides an overview of the Reaching Home program as follows:

- As previously reported at the last HHAC meeting, a Request for Proposal was issued in late 2019 to allocate funding for 2020-2024 (program years 2-5) through the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.
  - Total award of the contract is: \$2,497,679.95
    - Year 2 - \$526,527.40
    - Year 3 - \$657,050.85
    - Year 4 - \$657,050.85
    - Year 5 - \$657,050.85

- Housing Information Services was awarded the contract as the successful proponent in collaboration with Family Services Windsor-Essex, South Essex Community Council and Habitat for Humanity to continue to deliver the Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC), housing first program in Windsor Essex.
- As part of the renewed WEHC program, service enhancements and realignment of the positions within the various agencies were proposed in order to better respond to the needs of persons experiencing homelessness and to assist in achieving the goals and strategies of Home Together: Windsor Essex Housing & Homelessness Master Plan and the Reaching Home Community Plan.

### **OPHI Rental Housing Update**

#### **OPHI Rental Housing Updates – Meadowbrook Development**

J. Susko provides the following comments relating to the OPHI Rental Housing updates:

- SIF, IAH-E and OPHI funding of \$5,009,679
- Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation is reporting this project has achieved the following milestones:
  - obtained the required site specific zoning amendment
  - necessary permits and approval from the Essex Region Conversation Authority
  - clearance from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
  - concluded the complete design of the Passive House building and parking area
  - obtained the applicable building permit
  - procured the Construction Manager to engage and oversee the construction of the project

Construction of the parking area and the underground storm & sanitary work commenced early in 2020. CHC and the Construction Manager are in the process of concluding the selection of the subcontractors for the construction, which is anticipated to be completed in the next 8-10 weeks. Subsequently, completion of the construction is expected to take approximately 24 months.

### **Youth Supportive Project**

- Investment in Affordable Housing - 2014 Extension (IAH-E) funding of \$840,000
- The Family Services Windsor Essex Youth Supportive Housing Demonstration Project introduces innovation into the affordable housing market by building the first modular container housing in the Windsor area with accessible and universal

design components. This project will create a six unit, three-storey apartment complex to house 10 youth between the ages of 16-24 and will employ many of the principles of a Housing First for Youth program. The units will be technologically advanced, equipped with access to the internet with computer controlled and monitored thermostats. All unit doors will be keyless and accessible by an electronic card swipe eliminating the need for keys. Project completion is anticipated for the Fall of 2020.

### **Goal 3 – Ending Homelessness Emergency Shelter Review**

The Emergency Shelter Review was received by Housing Services at the beginning of 2020. Housing Services re-engaged with Vink Consulting to ensure recommendations included best practices as they related to the changes required as a result of COVID-19

### **Goal 7: Monitor, Report & Evaluate**

#### **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness: Recovery for All**

K. Goz provides the following relating to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Campaign– Recovery for All”

- The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness released a campaign titled “Recovery for All”
- Recovery for All is a national advocacy campaign led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, asking Canadians to encourage the federal government to make bold investments in housing, homelessness and income support to end homelessness in Canada, once and for all.
- The campaign includes a 6-point plan to end homelessness in Canada.
- For more information on the campaign please go to: [www.recoveryforall.ca](http://www.recoveryforall.ca)

#### **Point in Time Count**

Originally the Point in time Count was required to be completed by end of April 2020; however due to COVID-19. The Government of Canada has postponed /deferred this to April 2021.

#### 4.4 Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw & Official Plan Permitting Additional Units

Councillor McKenzie reports that City Council enthusiastically supported the amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Official Plan permitting additional units.

G. Robinson states that the regulations will go into effect on June 26, 2020. He adds the Planning Department is in the early stages of drafting brochures for interested parties that will outline information related to additional units.

#### 4.5 Establish a Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan Subcommittee

The Chair asks for three to five members of HHAC to sit on the Subcommittee.

J. Brunet provides the following examples from other communities that are using housing as a response to the pandemic:

From a national perspective, Windsor-Essex is facing similar challenges in the housing and homelessness sector to other communities. Communities are shifting their pandemic response to long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. Here are examples from other communities that are using housing as a response to the pandemic:

- *Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton* had a media release and a call for landlords that you can [find here](#). This is the call that mentions three months of pre-paid rent as one of their solutions.
- *Peterborough* has changed their approach to congregate housing by providing landlords with first/last then finding people to move into rooms and sign leases individually. They found that they were able to house people faster this way.
- *Sudbury* changed their rapid rehousing approach from just people experiencing chronic homelessness to anyone experiencing homelessness and has resulted in housing additional households.
- *Stratford-Perth-St. Marys* has a whatever-it-takes fund to support housing people. They use the funds to have conversations around diversion (i.e. where have you been staying these past few weeks, is it safe to go back there, what would it take to keep you housed there); landlord mitigation; housing visits (i.e. gave laptops to people they housed to support them with maintenance checks and home visits).

#### Meeting Dates

As HHAC meets quarterly, the following meeting dates are proposed:

- Wednesday, September 23, 2020
- Tuesday, November 24, 2020

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:34 o'clock a.m.

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**CHAIR**

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**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**