

**MINUTES OF THE
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 17, 2019**

THE CHAIR CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:02 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Alieda Blandford, Amy White, Ashley McKay, Jeff Dean, Leslie Robinson, Maureen Bourke, Riga Godron, Vanessa Hammond and Yuka Kurokawa

Committee Members Absent: Alfred Okot Ochen, Emily Rogers, Megan Billings.

Council Members Present: Jeremy Loveday

Staff Present: Lindsay Milburn – Senior Housing Planner
Devon Cownden – Secretary

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the meeting of September 17, 2019 was put forward for approval.

Motion:

It was moved by Vanessa Hammond, seconded by Riga Godron, that the Agenda for the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting agenda for September 17, 2019 be approved without changes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. APPROVAL OF THE LAST MEETING MINUTES

Motion:

It was moved by Alieda Blandford, seconded by Jeff Dean, that the Minutes of the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting held July 9, 2019 be approved without changes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lindsay Milburn discussed:

- the updated Victoria Housing Strategy, outlining key points such as a focus on affordable rentals, increasing housing supply and housing diversity.
- the upcoming presentation of the Tenant Assistance Plan 1-year review to Committee of the Whole on Thursday September 19, 2019.
- the Official Community Plan (OCP, 2012) annual review is being presented to Committee of the Whole on Thursday, September 19, 2019 and includes a report on housing statistics in Victoria.

4. AGENDA ITEMS

TOPIC OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION	ACTION, LEADER AND TIMELINE
<p>4.1 Revised Draft Terms of Reference</p> <p>Lindsay Milburn informed the Renters' Advisory Committee that City Council passed a motion that all motions from Committees of Council will be brought forward in Council's quarterly update reports, to better manage motions brought forward by all Committees of Council, including the Renters' Advisory Committee. Additionally, there is a process for a Councillor liaison to bring forward motions ahead of a quarterly update report if the matter is urgent to the Committee.</p> <p>Renters' Advisory Committee members discussed adding stronger wording to the Terms of Reference document related to improving existing rental stock as well as new stock, to emphasise the importance of all housing stock in Victoria.</p>	<p><u>Motion:</u></p> <p>It was moved by Leslie Robinson, seconded by Alieda Blandford that the Renters' Advisory Committee add "Protect and improve the quality and affordability of existing rental stock," to the Renters' Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</p>
<p>4.2 Residential Properties Standards of Maintenance Bylaw (RPSOM) Sub-committee Update</p> <p>Lindsay Milburn provided an update of the upcoming RPSOM draft bylaw that staff will be presenting to Council and her discussions with the RPSOM sub-committee.</p> <p>Alieda Blandford presented a recommendation to the Renters' Advisory Committee from the RPSOM sub-committee to endorse the draft RPSOM bylaw with a recommendation for a 1-year review to address any challenges or concerns after implementation.</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee discussed the current lack of requirements for landlords to repair and maintain their rental property and the logistics of informing and keeping tenants up to date on the status of repair work on their dwellings.</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee discussed recommending the following changes:</p>	<p><u>Motion:</u></p> <p>It was moved by Jeff Dean, seconded by Alieda Blandford that the Renters' Advisory Committee recommend adding 'if an elevator is out of service a landlord must notify each tenant in writing as soon as possible. The notice must ask tenants to make their needs known and the landlord will create a plan to meet those needs in tandem with the tenant within 48 hours. There must be regular updates to the tenants on the elevator status.' To the RPSOM bylaw.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</p> <p>The draft RPSOM bylaw outlines a requirement for landlords to 'accommodate the needs of tenants with mobility challenges' when an elevator is under repair. Lindsay will indicate the Renters' Advisory Committee proposes removing with the words, "Mobility challenges", from the draft RPSOM bylaw to be inclusive of all tenants.</p>

TOPIC OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION	ACTION, LEADER AND TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Elevators</u> - If an elevator is out of service, a landlord must notify each tenant, in writing as soon as possible. The notice must ask tenants to make their needs known and the landlord will create a plan to meet those needs in tandem with the tenant within 48 hours. There must be regular updates to the tenants on the status of elevator repair. • <u>Leaks From Plumbing or Water Ingress</u> - Areas damaged by water or plumbing ingress must be repaired or replaced • <u>Pest Control Management</u> - Tenants must cooperate with landlords to ensure the effective elimination of the infestation however, Landlords must accommodate alternative treatment options according to tenant needs. 	<p>Lindsay Milburn will investigate the process for the City to officially designate, “elevator repair”, as an emergency repair and report back to the Renters’ Advisory Committee on October 15, 2019.</p> <p>Lindsay Milburn will inquire with the Fire Department as to what the current egress procedure for people with mobility issues in case of fire and provide an update to the Renters’ Advisory Committee on October 15, 2019.</p> <p>The RPSOM sub-committee will work on a notification process for tenants affected by building repairs and draft general wording that a landlord may use to update tenants on elevator service timelines.</p> <p>Lindsay Milburn will include the Renters’ Advisory Committee’s recommended bylaw wording changes to the RPSOM staff report that will be presented to Council.</p>
<p>4.3 Revised Draft Workplan - The Renters’ Advisory Committee will review the draft workplan.</p> <p>Discussion on the motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renters’ Advisory Committee members identified a lack of information on how tenant engagement is currently being carried out and would like more information about current engagement processes • Lindsay Milburn informed the Renters’ Advisory Committee that tenant engagement is an action item in the Housing Strategy and that the Renters’ Advisory Committee will be asked for input on how to fulfill this action • creation of a Renters’ Advisory Committee email that members of the public could use to contact the Renters’ Advisory Committee. 	<p><u>Motion:</u></p> <p>It was moved by Jeff Dean, seconded by Yuka Kurokawa that the Renters’ Advisory Committee adopt the Draft Workplan.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</p> <p>The Renters’ Advisory Committee will discuss tenant engagement at the Oct 15, 2019 Renters’ Advisory Committee Meeting. Lindsay will request that a member of the City’s engagement team attend the next Renters’ Advisory Committee meeting to speak about the City’s engagement process.</p>

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<p>4.4 Tenant Assistance Plan (TAP) Review</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee discussed the moving costs, expenses and tenant eligibility in the TAP. The Renters' Advisory Committee expressed a desire to have tenant moving costs covered at 100% under the TAP and to remove the 1-year minimum tenancy requirement to be eligible for compensation through the TAP.</p>	<p>Amy White will continue to lead the Renters' Advisory Committee TAP sub-committee.</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee will discuss the Sept 19, 2019 City Council meeting regarding TAP at the Oct 15, 2019 Renters' Advisory Committee Meeting and begin discussing a recommendation for another 1-year review of the TAP.</p>
<p>4.5 Housing Talk Series – Staff will seek input from the Renters' Advisory Committee regarding future Housing Talk Series topics and speakers.</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee put forward several topic ideas for the Housing Talk Series:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a presentation from the B.C. Residential Tenancy Branch's new compliance and enforcement unit. • a discussion about how municipal and provincial housing policy intersect • an information session about how people can get funding for advocacy groups or co-ops • housing and how it effects your health with the Victoria health co-op • request an expert speaker from Uvic to provide presentation on housing or a related topic. 	<p>Lindsay Milburn will change the title of the "Public Housing Talk Series" to "Housing Talk Series".</p> <p>Renters' Advisory Committee members will email Lindsay Milburn directly with suggestions on topics for the Housing Talk Series.</p> <p>Alieda Blandford will provide a list of potential public speakers for Lindsay Milburn.</p>
<p>4.6 Recap of the meeting between members of the Renters' Advisory Committee and Spencer Chandra Herbert, Chair of the B.C. Government's Rental Task Force.</p> <p>The Renters' Advisory Committee discussed topics brought up in their meeting with Spencer Chandra Herbert:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vacancy control (tying rent to the unit instead of the tenant) to de-incentive the eviction of tenants to increase rental rates 	<p>The Renters' Advisory Committee has reached out to Andrew Weaver, B.C. MLA, with a request for him to speak to the Renters' Advisory Committee about rental and housing issues.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how developers may reduce the number of rental development projects if annual rent increases are low • vulnerable tenants, such as hospital patients • asking the City to advocate for vacancy control, to lead the way for other municipalities. 	

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

It was moved by Riga Godron, seconded by Yuka Kurokawa, that The Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of September 17, 2019, be adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY