

**MINUTES OF THE
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 21, 2019**

1. RIGA GODRON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:07 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Amy White, Leslie Robinson (by phone),
Megan Billings, Riga Godron,
Vanessa Hammond, Yuka Kurokawa

**Committee Members Present
for a Portion of the Meeting:** Alfred Okot Ochen, Alieda Blandford, Ashley
McKay, Emily Rogers, Jeff Dean

Absent: Maureen Bourke

Council Members Present: Sharmarke Dubow

**Council Members Present
for a Portion of the Meeting:** Jeremy Loveday

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

**Staff Present for a Portion
of the Meeting:** Chris Coates – City Clerk

2. ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes from the Meeting held April 16, 2019 were put forward for adoption.

Motion:

It was moved by Vanessa Hammond, seconded by Riga Godron, that the Minutes of the Renter's Advisory Committee meeting held April 16, 2019 be approved without changes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hollie McKeil gave a brief overview of the upcoming workshop on Residential Rental Tenure Zoning and invited the Renters' Advisory Committee to attend on May 30, 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Hollie McKeil invited the Renters' Advisory Committee members to share any stories or experiences looking for housing in Victoria, to be included in the Housing Strategy document to provide context of local housing needs.

The Committee discussed:

- reaching out to the community planning council in Victoria to provide stories

- ensuring that consent is given by individuals contributing stories
- interest in providing stories for the Victoria Housing Strategy.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Chris Coates highlighted sections of the Committee's Terms of Reference that Council tasked the Committee to review, including its operating requirements and provided rationale and advice on why Council asked the Committee to consider adding and amending sections of the Terms of Reference.

The Committee discussed:

- amending the Terms of Reference document and the process for creating amendments going forward
- the role of the co-chairs in Renters' Advisory Committee meetings and mandating collaboration between co-chairs
- adding a strategic work plan section to the Terms of Reference document
- the nature of a potential work plan and what it would look like for the Renters' Advisory Committee
- how discussion of topics outside the work plan will be limited
- how adding a work plan to the Terms of Reference document may help focus the Committee's discussion.

Motion:

It was moved by Jeff Dean, seconded by Vanessa Hammond, that the Terms of Reference for the Renters' Advisory Committee be amended to include the election of two co-chairs. The co-chairs will determine between themselves, working collaboratively, who will co-chair the meetings.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion:

It was moved by Jeff Dean, seconded by Alieda Blandford, that the Terms of Reference be amended to include an annual strategic work plan to identify focus areas for the Renters' Advisory Committee. The work plan shall be submitted for Council's consideration with a report on the items in the strategic work plan. The work plan shall developed based on referrals from Council, City staff and issues identified by the Renters' Advisory Committee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON THE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The co-chairs conducted a round table discussion of topics that may be of interest to the Committee and what may be included in the official work plan.

The Committee discussed:

- the Standards of Maintenance bylaw changes and the health of rental properties

- funding from the municipal government for local tenant associations and groups
- the role of police when a tenant has been illegally locked out by landlords
- creating a list of landlords and rental properties for licencing purposes
- licencing landlords to increase compliance with arbitration decisions
- policing homelessness
- tenant assistance policy:
 - assisting in relocating tenants who have been displaced for various reasons
 - a centralized database of housing available for renters displaced by development
 - potential incentive for developers to assist with tenant relocation and creation of a priority list for displaced tenants.
- access to housing:
 - after hospital discharge
 - for vulnerable and minority populations
 - for families that require additional rooms
 - for pet owners
 - in emergency situations
 - for renters displaced by demo-viction, renoviction or similar situations.
- Councillor Dubow noted that a renoviction bylaw is being brought forward by Council and the Committee's to provide input before the bylaw's creation and implementation
- renters' safety during tenancy
- security of tenure
- eviction process
- building rental communities and creating a sense of place
- lobbying the province for changes to the Community Charter
- prioritizing purpose-built rental housing with an emphasis on affordability
- supporting renters' rights though education and self-advocacy
- short term funding options for renters with who cannot make rent payments
- categorizing rental issues in order to focus on specific problems that affect different renters in particular circumstances
- increasing land values when Rezoning applications are completed and how they affect affordability of rental units
- how densification disproportionately benefits land owners compared to renters
- controlling land value:
 - in favour of purpose-built rentals by looking into prezoning, community land auctions and increased community contributions when a land parcel is rezoned
 - creating a housing levy to create a fund for affordable housing and the likelihood of public adoption of a levy.
- encouraging development of affordable rental housing
- Councillor Dubow suggested that the focus of this action should be shifted towards new affordable housing development rather than market rental housing
 - the importance of working in conjunction with current City initiatives to create efficient change

- concerns regarding land use at 950 Kings Road:
 - increased density of low-income housing
 - desire for the inclusion of a bedroom count in future development projects.
- Councillor Dubow advised the Committee that a motion will be on the May 23, 2019 Agenda regarding the Rezoning of 950 Kings Road and how this may change the land use.

6. THE SCOPE OF THE RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The co-chairs facilitated discussion about the scope of the Renters' Advisory Committee and whether it should include represent homelessness and shelters.

The Committee discussed:

- how the committee defines renters and whether this definition includes individuals and families struggling with homelessness
- the precarious living circumstances of many renters in Victoria
- the difference between individuals who are struggling vs. homeless
- how the scope of the Committee should be inclusive to all renters.

7. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES AND FORMULATING MOTIONS

Hollie McKeil and Lindsay Milburn answered questions from the Committee regarding staff support for the Committee and current challenges around bylaw enforcement.

The Committee discussed:

- what happens when a motion is put forward to Council
 - staff support, resourcing and legal advice is available for motions and projects related to the Renters' Advisory Committee
- potential benefits to supporting City policy that is in the process of being adopted
- the scope of the work plan for the current Renters' Advisory Committee and future Rental Advisory Committees:
 - staff will review the list of topics put forward by the Renters' Advisory Committee and prepare a document outlining what is currently being addressed by the City
 - a brief overview of the Standards of Maintenance bylaw was provided, including challenges with bylaw implementation, identifying enforcement costs as a barrier
- the need for more public input into the Standards of Maintenance bylaw
- requesting that split rate taxation be added to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities agenda
- Councillor Dubow recommended that the Committee identify three or four priority items for 2019 & 2020, to allow goals to be set
- bringing forward motions in order to prioritize discussion:
 - the feasibility of requiring motions to start discussion on topics that the Committee will address

- how to focus the Committee discussion through the use of motions
- concerns about accomplishing the Committee's goals without forming clear motions
- aligning the Committee discussion with topics already being put forward by Council
- Councillor Dubow advised the Committee that Council meetings often have discussion topics without motions attached
 - Lindsay Milburn will follow up with the City Clerk regarding recommendations and the procedure for bringing motions forward.

8. CHILDCARE AT RENTERS'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The co-chairs discussed City-provided childcare for committee and Panel meetings.

The Committee discussed:

- making a recommendation to Council that childcare be provided at the Committee meetings
- using a voucher system to help provide childcare options and to cover costs for committee and panel members when only one or two members need childcare
- asking staff to determine whether childcare will be available for the Renters' Advisory Committee and other committees and panels
- how childcare is only available during scheduled COTW & Council meetings in the evenings with a 2 hour limit
- implementation of a priority speaker list for families using childminding services.

Motion:

It was moved by Riga Godron, seconded by Ashley McKay that the Renter's Advisory Committee recommend to Council that childcare be made available for all Committee and Panel meetings at City Hall.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

It was moved by Riga Godron, seconded by Alieda Blandford, that the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of May 21, 2019 be adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY