

**MINUTES OF THE
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 2022**

1. Ryan Moen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Committee Members: Yuka Kurokawa (Co-Chair)
Ryan Moen (Co-Chair)
Azmina Janmohamed
Carrie Chapple
Heather Kirkham
Neha Sharma
Stefanie Hardman
Ramya G N Reddy
Trevor Premack

Regrets: Alieda Blandford
Leslie Robinson

Councillors Present: Councillor Andrew
Councillor Potts

Guest Viewers: Abi Michel

Staff Present: Julie Edney – Housing Planner
Rory Stever – Staff Liaison, Tenant Planner
Andrew Cusack – Senior Planner, Housing Policy
Ayla Conklin – Planning Secretary

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

It was moved by Carrie Chapple, seconded by Heather Kirkham, that the February 15, 2022 Agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that the January 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Introductions

Rory Stever, Tenant Planner, introduced the two new members, the new Housing Planner and notified of a member's resignation.

5. Renter Engagement Project with the Shift Initiative

Rory Stever, Tenant Planner, introduced the Shift Initiative and Renter Engagement Project.

The committee discussed:

- Is the SHIFT able to provide monetary compensation to the non-profits?
 - The SHIFT has some discretionary budget dedicated to this project and we're also hoping that the work can align with local non-profits' work plans.
 - Staff will share the recording with the SHIFT team.
- When a landlord has the power to provide/revoke a human right such as housing there is a power imbalance. Through [research](#) with Community Social Planning Council: tenants felt they couldn't raise concerns due to the risk of losing their housing and not being unable to find another unit. There is also discrimination in the housing market and while tenants are being housed.
- There is an imbalance due to the lack of availability of rentals. This transfers a lot of power to landlords. Newly landed immigrants can't provide references or credit history and this could play into discrimination.
- The lack of availability puts tenants in vulnerable positions. There are also protections with a management company versus a direct landlord.
- Housing should not be based on luck.
- Is there a time that the staff with the SHIFT could join a subcommittee meeting to discuss? Who is interested in joining the subcommittee?
- Yuka Kurokawa, Stefanie Hardman, Trevor Premack, Ramya Reddy and Ryan Moen expressed interest.
- Soonest possible meeting February 28, 2022 at 6:30 pm. Is it possible for the SHIFT staff to attend this time?
 - The SHIFT staff are nine hours ahead which creates a challenge with getting a time. Staff will connect with the SHIFT to determine their availability.

6. Rental Property Standards of Maintenance (RPSOM) Engagement Project Plans and Update

Rory Stever, Tenant Planner, to introduce the RPSOM Engagement Plan.

The committee discussed:

- Enforcement of the RPSOM bylaw is done by the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) Compliance and Enforcement Unit.
- What type of staffing levels does the RTB have in Victoria to manage tenant complaints?
 - The RTB Compliance and Enforcement Unit is equipped to manage tenant complaints, but staff are not aware of how many are available to specifically enforce this bylaw.
- Renters may not associate the City with being a resource. Historically, city services are geared towards owners. There needs to be an enhancement of awareness so renters feel they can turn to the City for support.
- Councillor Andrew – If a tenant has an issue related to maintenance, what can they do?
 - Staff advise tenants on how to submit a complaint to the RTB. The Compliance and Enforcement Unit tends to be overwhelmed and therefore prioritizes large and severe issues over individual secondary rental units.
 - Councillor Andrew – Why is there a bylaw that the City can't enforce?
 - The bylaw allows the City to have higher standards than the RTA. Council decided against providing the additional resources for enforcement due to the cost and potential implications. Even if the City provided enforcement, tenants would still need to report their problems to the RTB.
- Currently there is no vacancy control in BC. There is concern that tenants would be evicted by raising a complaint with the RTB. Is there a difference between now and the time of the bylaw publication?
 - The new renoviction prevention process in the *Residential Tenancy Act* (RTA) is

- designed to prevent these types of punitive evictions.
 - Staff are undertaking an 18-month observation and review of the bylaw after which they will report to Council on its efficacy and share tenant feedback.
- Will there be wording to warn tenants that landlords can still renoct them?
 - The Renter Engagement Project will build awareness for the RTA amendments and RPSOM jointly. The RTA amendments are designed to address this type of threats of eviction. Given the number of complaints received by the RTB, tenants in the secondary housing market will have difficulty getting support.
- The enforcement issue has been brought forward several times.
 - The RPSOM engagement campaign has been delayed due to COVID reprioritization and staff turnover therefore it needs to start as soon as possible. The report going to Council will include feedback on issues around enforcement.

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that Council provides all the necessary staffing and funding to make the Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw enforceable.

The committee discussed:

- Suggestion for a friendly amendment to include “at the municipal level”.
- Is it realistic that this will be enforced at the municipal level?
 - Unknown how feasible it would be to enforce this at the municipal level. Staff can explore.
- Councillor Andrew – Suggestion for the motion to direct the liaison to research and investigate (discuss with city solicitor etc..) and report back to Council.
- Councillor Potts – Council received a report about the enforcement issue. Suggestion to bring this report to the next meeting to discuss.

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that Council provides all the necessary staffing and funding to make the Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw enforceable at the municipal level.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. Parking Lot Discussion

- [Solid Outreach Land Use Committee Meeting](#) – there was supposed to be a City liaison at the North Park Community meeting to report back.
 - Councillor Potts – There were two community meetings to discuss their business. [The North Park Community Association and Land Use Committee](#) can provide more details. We can provide you with their [contact information](#). They are hoping to expand.
- Are there incentives for housing for people of First Nation, Metis and Inuit status? These groups are vulnerable to poverty and often discriminated against. There is no purpose-built housing for BC Metis. There is an opportunity for purpose-built housing for Metis populations. Suggestion for a [BC Metis Federation](#) collaboration.
 - BC Housing has several different funds to support indigenous housing. [The Indigenous Housing Fund](#) supports both on and off-reserve. Unknown how many are in Victoria.

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that Council consider liaising with the BC Metis Federation regarding partnerships for housing.

The committee discussed:

- Great motion to start a dialogue.
- There are no specific reserves for Metis in British Columbia.
- Friendly amendment to include “and [Metis Nation British Columbia](#)”

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie Chapple, that Council consider liaising with the BC Metis Federation and Metis Nation British Columbia regarding partnerships for housing.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. Adjournment

Motion:

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Carrie, that the Renters’ Advisory Committee meeting of February 15, 2022 be adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY