

# MINUTES OF THE RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 21, 2023

## 1. Ryan Moen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Committee Members (5):** Ryan Moen (Chair)  
Heather Kirkham  
Trevor Premack  
Stefanie Hardman  
Ramya GN Reddy

**Regrets (1):** Neha Sharma

**Staff Present:** Andrew Cusack – Senior Planner, Housing Policy  
Ayla Conklin – Planning Secretary

## 2. Approval of Agenda

### **Motion:**

It was moved by Stefanie Hardman, seconded by Trevor Premack,  
that the February 21, 2023 Agenda be approved.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes

### **Motion:**

It was moved by Ryan Moen, seconded by Trevor Premack,  
that the November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 4. Update on New RAC Members and Council Liaison Appointments

Andrew Cusack, Senior Planner – Housing Policy, provided an update on appointing new committee members and councillor liaisons.

The committee discussed:

- Members are frustrated with the delay. Members questioned the value and impact of the committee in the eyes of Council.
  - The RAC provides an important voice to inform policies that staff have been instructed to bring to Council. Due to the start of the new Council term, there have been delays in moving work forward. If committee members would like to be more involved in community advocacy that supports renter issues, staff have a list of community organizations that can be contacted.
- Is the governance review public?
  - Yes – link provided: [Governance Review | Have Your Say \(victoria.ca\)](#)
- RAC members expressed disappointment that no Councillors attended the meeting even if not appointed as liaisons yet.
- How are the new members chosen?

- Legislative Services reviews the applications and proposed candidates get sent to Council for approval.

## 5. Rental Incentives Policy Update

Andrew Cusack, Senior Planner – Housing Policy, presented the results of the economic analysis and the proposed approach for the policy.

The committee discussed:

- Can you clarify the reduction in parking? What strategies are in place to still serve tenants that rely on vehicles due to disability or age?
  - Reduced parking rates don't affect accessibility spaces and visitor parking spaces. The parking spaces that are reduced are part of the ratio per unit. The requirement was 1:1 and what is being proposed is 0.5 spaces per unit and possibly less.
- Does the City define private motorized vehicles as accessibility items?
  - Staff in our transportation team that could speak on this.
- It would be preferable to see the reduction in parking to increase the number of units rather than other trade-offs.
  - More affordable units are a consideration when discussing a reduction in parking.
- Is it a requirement for applicants to provide a community amenity in order to reduce parking?
  - Usually, this is negotiated through the variance process.
- Has the City enacted Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ)?
  - The RRTZ bylaw has passed and direction from Council has been given to pilot this in several neighbourhoods. There is resistance to change the zoning on all property owners due to the negative influence on property value. As discussed in the Local Area Planning session, RRTZ is foreseen to be used as a tool to incentivize rental projects rather than applied uniformly across the City.
- Does RRTZ help protect purpose-built rental properties?
  - The City has a the [OCP rental replacement policy](#) that protects purpose-built rental buildings. A new project must replace units 1:1. An update to this policy could strengthen protections further.
- How early will RAC be consulted on this?
  - The beginning stages of the updates will likely be in the fall. This policy already exists.
- Discussion on the right of first refusal (ROFR)?
  - RTA states that displaced tenants must be offered a unit in the new building (at market rate). The ROFR through the *Tenant Assistance Policy* requires that new units be offered at 20% below market. However, because of current rent rates, a tenant's previous rent may still be significantly lower than that.
- When and how is the City ensuring that ROFR is being enforced?
  - In the past, it was complaint based. If a new building is built and the tenant is not offered a unit, the complaint is filed and there is remediation.
  - The tenant assistant planner reviews Tenant Assistance Plans and the tenant signs to confirm they have reviewed and expressed that they are interested in ROFR.
- Will ROFR cause other rents in the building to increase in order to make up the loss created by below market units?
  - It may play to broader market impacts. The developer can choose their rent prices. The City is providing a tax exemption to mitigate the impact of providing affordable units to ensure the project remains viable.
- Are there incentives for existing landlords to continue offering low rents or initiate repairs?
  - There is a parallel project called [Market Rental Revitalization Study](#) that came to Council in 2018. This project was to provide landlords with a tax exemption to complete upgrades to the building.
    - Request to have the staff working on the project to present to the RAC for information purposes.

## **6. Adjournment**

### **Motion:**

It was moved by Heather Kirkham, seconded by Trevor Premack,

that the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of February 21, 2023 be adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**