

**MINUTES OF THE
RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 30, 2021**

YUKA KUROKAWA CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:30 P.M.

Committee Members: Yuka Kurokawa (Chair)
Alieda Blandford
Leslie Robinson
Azmina Janmohamed
Carrie Chapple
Heather Kirkham
Neha Sharma
Ryan Moen
Amy Dewar
Stefanie Hardman

Regrets: Tereza Ticha
Vanessa Hammond

Councillors Present: Councillor Andrew
Councillor Potts

Staff Present: Andrea Hudson – Assistant Director, Community Planning
Andrew Cusack – Senior Planner, Housing Policy
Rory Stever – Staff Liaison, Tenant Planner
Ayla Conklin – Planning Secretary

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion:

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa, seconded by Ryan Moen that the November 30, 2021 Agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion:

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa, seconded by Ryan Moen that the November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. INTRODUCTION – RORY STEVER, NEW RAC STAFF LIAISON

Rory Stever, Staff Liaison for RAC, provided a brief introduction.

The committee discussed:

- Request for Rory's contact information.

4. ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND COASTAL COMMUNITIES (AVICC) MOTIONS

Andrew Cusack presented the Renters' Advisory Committee with information regarding AVICC motions. The deadline for these motions to be brought forward is January 28, 2021. A subcommittee

could form to draft these motions in December to be presented at the RAC meeting on January 18, 2021.

The committee discussed:

- Previous experience is that there is risk to put a motion forward in case it fails at Council. Interest in vacancy control.
 - Councillor Potts: Councillors would be included in lobbying for the motion.
- What is AVICC? What are the main topics for AVICC?
 - Councillor Potts: AVICC is a governing body that can put forward motions to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Recent popular topics are flooding, housing crisis, mental health issues and health care. Interest in joining subcommittee.
- Subcommittee members for AVICC motions: Azmina, Neha, Leslie, Amy, Ryan, Yuka, Councillor Potts.

5. CO-CHAIR ELECTION

Committee members nominated a co-chair for the remainder of the 2022 Term. Staff also brought forward a scheduling conflict with a new member to discuss a course of action.

The committee discussed:

- Recommendation that incoming co-chair would commit to taking over at the end of 2022 term.
- Ryan Moen nominated Stefanie Hardman.
- Stefanie Hardman declined and nominated Ryan Moen.
- Electing a chair this early in the term may exclude people because they may not be confident to put their name forward. It would be more convenient if there was a three-year term.
- Is the two-year term due to a lack of commitment by the City?
- Is the list of candidates still available?
 - Legislative Services has the recruitment lists.

Motion

It was moved by Stefanie Hardman, seconded by Leslie Robinson, that Ryan Moen be nominated as a co-chair of the Renters' Advisory Committee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion

It was moved by Alieda Blandford, seconded by Leslie Robinson, that the committee requests staff to take a poll of all current committee members to determine whether there is another time slot when all members are available. If there is no such time slot, the committee requests that Legislative Services find a replacement member who is available on Tuesdays at 6:30pm from amongst applicants.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. PLANNING STAFF 2022 WORK PLAN (DRAFT)

Andrew Cusack, temporary staff liaison, presented a draft of the 2022 Planning Staff Work Plan.

The committee discussed:

- In Part 5 Measurable outcomes for the Housing Strategy p.65: "increase percentage of Victoria residents who own their own homes". How does this align to the Renter's Advisory Committee and Missing Middle? Is the strategy to increase home ownership and decrease renters?
 - Strategy is not to move renters into owners. Homes are generally unaffordable

to rent and to buy. Moreso - how can the City facilitate choice – for both renters and prospective buyers.

- If the City is working towards reconciliation, shouldn't the City be moving away from prioritizing land ownership? The Housing Strategy does not discuss indigenous reconciliation.
- Is there truly a shortage of housing supply? There is a lack of accessible housing. Increasing supply doesn't positively impact low-income tenants.
- Request to increase the City's focus towards renters.
- The BC Housing transitional housing in local hotels is concerning. Suggestion for RAC to review how the non-profit sector is facilitating this type of housing and how it is developed. The people moving into these facilities are not being consulted on their needs.
 - Working with indigenous groups is a great suggestion to influence the work plan.
 - Staff are not in the position to add items to the workplan. The staff workplan is heavily influenced by Council.
- Home ownership provides residents with many forms of stability (including financial). It's not supportable for the City to spend public funds to support home ownership.

7. RENTERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The committee discussed:

- The Missing Middle project is not directly related to rental housing. Request that the committee no longer discusses this topic.
- The *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* (RPSOM) is currently in an 18-month review phase, and it is not being promoted. Why is the City not promoting this? Very few tenants have experience using the bylaw, the review phase would not be reflective as the public is not even aware it exists.
- Recommendation to increase funding for tenant groups. In 2017, there was a motion that included funding for tenant groups.
 - There needs to be more engagement on the *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* and is a high priority for the staff liaison.
 - Council has endorsed Missing Middle which directs staff and the committee. We can note that Missing Middle is a low priority for RAC.
- Support that ownership models not to be discussed at RAC.
- Is the City willing to take on the lawsuits against landlords that are not addressing repairs or are tenants having to move due to disrepair? Request for legal funding.
 - Councillor Potts: what engagement has been completed for RPSOM and what is the plan? Connect newsletter is being distributed again. Council can also endorse the engagement.
 - There are meetings this week with Engagement on RPSOM.
 - Councillor Andrew: There is a lack of enforcement on this bylaw. Who at the City is enforcing the bylaw? Suggestion for bylaw to file the complaints to protect the tenant at all costs.
 - Enforcement is through the Rental Tenancy Branch (RTB) process. Through RTB, tenants can file their complaints. The RTB also has a Complaints and Enforcement department.
 - RPSOM builds on the Rental Tenancy Act (RTA). Making the requirements of the RTA stricter. That's why it relies on the RTB to enforce as the bylaw is written. Staff need to record this issue when it's time to review the bylaw and propose changes.
- Homeowners can request bylaw support regarding a neighbour's large hedge. As a tenant, we don't receive bylaw support for RPSOM bylaw infractions. There is a large burden on tenants to prove repairs and incur costs while going through the RTB process.
- RAC had a lot of input on the RPSOM bylaw. There has not been follow up on the bylaw. The process is not effective. Engagement department not communicating to tenants. Recommendation for the RPSOM bylaw to include inspections and strictly enforced.

- Added as priority in the work plan and a follow up for in January 2022.
- Is Council willing to hire lawyer to defend the RPSOM bylaw in provincial or federal court?
 - The City has funded New Westminster's legal challenges. There is cooperation between municipalities to support tenant protections.
- The RPSOM bylaw is a minimum standard. There is fear to file complaints as landlords can use an eviction for financial gain.
- Is Rental Tenure Zoning on the work plan?
 - Combined with rental incentives project.
- Recommendation for Family Rental Policy and training to VicPD officers about tenant rights.
 - Included in the rental and capacity project.
- Support for SHIFT initiative.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE AMENDMENTS – SUBCOMMITTEE

Andrew Cusack brought forward the previous request for amendments to the Terms of Reference. Changes to the Terms of Reference would go to Council for approval.

The committee discussed:

- Does RAC collaborate on Proposed Development Notices with Community Association Land Use Committees?
 - Proposed Development Notices do not come to RAC directly. The staff liaison has conversations with developers and tenants to ensure they are protected as their development applications move forward. These notices are geared towards residents close to the development.
- Request for a chart to track and review discussions and allotted time for general discussion.

Motion:

It was moved by Alieda Blandford, seconded by Ryan Moen, that staff include the *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* in the next Connect newsletter.

- Clarification that the staff present in the meeting are not involved in the Connect newsletter content.

Amendment:

It was moved by Carrie Chapple, seconded by Azmina Janmohamed, to amend the motion to include: "provide information to renters who have had to vacate their units due to catastrophic events" in the motion.

CARRIED (8/10)

Amended Motion:

It was moved by Alieda Blandford, seconded by Ryan Moen, that staff include the *Rental Property Standards of Maintenance Bylaw* and provide information to renters who have had to vacate their units due to catastrophic events in the next Connect newsletter.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

It was moved by Yuka Kurokawa, seconded by Alieda Blandford that the Renters' Advisory Committee meeting of November 30, 2021 be adjourned at 8:49 P.M.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY