

Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee

Meeting held February 23, 2021

A meeting of the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Marina Clemens, Chair
Councillor Kieran McKenzie
Anna Angelidis (arrives at 10:06 a.m.)
Jessica Brunet
Fiona Coughlin
Phil Dorner (arrives at 10:12 a.m.)
Kathy Hay
Eric Hill
Mayor Gary McNamara
Leigh Vachon
Angela Yakonich

Regrets received from:

Judith Binder
Joyce Zuk

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Chris Aspila, Planner III
Jeannie Diamond Francis, County of Essex
Tina Moore, Coordinator, Housing Administration & Development
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:02 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule "A" attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Mayor McNamara,
That the minutes of the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee of its
meeting held November 25, 2020 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 COVID Update

T. Moore advises that Housing Services in collaboration with a number of partners is currently managing an outbreak in the emergency shelter system. Currently supporting three sites to address the isolation requirements as indicated by the WECHU:

- Isolation and Recovery Centre (hotel model)
- AGRI Isolation and Recovery Centre In Collaboration with the Red Cross (hotel model)
- Windsor International Aquatic and Training Centre (temporary shelter space)

The Downtown Mission of Windsor (Downtown Mission), in partnership with the City of Windsor (the City), supported by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) and numerous other partners are putting in place the emergency supports required to ensure that Windsor's vulnerable populations can access temporary shelter facilities following a COVID-19 outbreak at the Downtown Mission and Salvation Army.

The Medical Officer of Health for the WECHU, Dr. Wajid Ahmed, has issued an outbreak order under the Health Promotion and Protection Act (HPPA) Section 29(2) limiting the continued operations of the Downtown Mission in Windsor, in response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and rise in cases. To support vulnerable persons in need of emergency shelter services, the City of Windsor and a coalition of partners are working to establish a temporary facility at the Windsor International Aquatic and Training Centre (also known as the aquatic centre) at 401 Pitt Street West.

In partnership with the City and with support from the Canadian Red Cross, the aquatic centre shelter will be operational along with staffing resources from a number of local agencies. The Downtown Mission has entered into a Collaboration Management Support Agreement with Assisted Living Southwestern (ALSO), the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Family Services Windsor Essex (FSWE), and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH) for the aquatic centre location. The partnership will support the staff of the Downtown Mission at the temporary emergency shelter. Use of this facility to support vulnerable persons will continue until the WECHU determines that the Downtown Mission site can safely re-open, in compliance with public health guidelines.

Moved by A. Yakonich, seconded by J. Brunet,
That the COVID update provided by T. Moore, Coordinator Housing
Administration & Development **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.2 Goal 1: Sustain & expand social housing & affordable housing supply Canada Ontario Housing Benefit and Windsor Essex Housing Benefit Update

T. Moore provides the following updates:

Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

As of January 2021, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) on behalf of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) approved 214 COHB applications in Windsor and Essex County.

Upon the programs release on May 11, 2020, over two thousand expressions of interest were received and managed on a first come first serve basis. Interested residents were provided with information on the eligibility criteria e.g., on or eligible to be on our centralized waitlist, estimate of their benefit, and were assisted with the application process. In administering the COHB, analysis confirms that the COHB benefit calculation results in a shallower subsidy (average benefit of \$280 per month) when compared to RGI housing and Windsor-Essex rent supplement programs. Staff worked through the enquiries to ensure that those expressing an interest could make an informed choice about proceeding with the COHB or choosing to stay on the centralized waitlist for geared-to-income rent.

Upon the release of the COHB program the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) closely monitored COHB allocations and take up across all communities in Ontario, and in October 2020 MMAH advised COHB funding needed to be delivered as early in the fiscal year (April 1 – March 31, 2021) as possible. Furthermore, the Ministry advised they would be assessing take up in all communities to assess whether reallocating from Service Managers who have uncommitted funding will be required. Housing Services provided MMAH with projections confirming full take up in Windsor Essex by December 31st and strongly advocated for the retention of our full 2020-21 COHB allocation (\$755,473). On October 5, 2020, Windsor Essex had 69 eligible COHB applications processed. Upon notification that the unspent allocation might be redistributed to other communities, concentrated mitigation efforts were put into place to ensure the maximization of our 2020-21 COHB allocation.

On December 23, 2020, MMAH released a notification advising of a temporary pause on the COHB for the 2020-21 program year.).

With the intense mitigation strategies put in place and the efforts of CHC’s COHB administration team and the City of Windsor Housing staff, we are pleased to advise of an increase in the total eligible COHB applications by 145 eligible applicants increasing the total eligible COHB applications to 214. An approximate 310% improvement over the October 5th numbers which resulted in the Windsor Essex allocation being fully taken up for 2020-21.

Windsor Essex Housing Benefit (WEHB)

WEHB offers must be made in order of priority on the Central Housing Registry - Windsor Essex County (CHR-WEC) waitlist as these benefits count towards the Windsor Essex legislated service level standard. WEHB offers to Priority I and Priority II applicants have been issued, addressed and processed. To date 40 households from our centralized waitlist have been deemed eligible and approved for the WEHB. New CHR-WEC applicants in Priority I and II are being offered access to the WEHB upon notification of their eligibility on the centralized wait list. Offers to Priority III (chronological) applicants are now being issued in batches based on application date. It is expected that take up by chronological applicants on the CHR-WEC will be higher due to the length of time households would likely wait for an offer of rent geared to income housing.

As the administrator of the program Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation, staff will continue to provide further information, guidance to interested applicants, as well as, confirming program eligibility, providing assistance and direction in terms of completing the application process for individuals who are deemed eligible and subsequently processing applications and issuing payments to eligible applicants.

4.2 Goal 2 – Capital-Funding Opportunities

There have been a number of funding announcements from the provincial and federal government to help shift the focus from emergency response to long-term housing solutions. Updates are provided in the table below.

Funding Stream	Funding Ministry	Amount	Month Allocation Received	Notes
Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF Phase I)	Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH)	\$3.7 million	April 2020	No changes
Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF Phase II)	Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH)	\$10 million	December 2020	As part of the federal-provincial Safe Start Agreement for 2020-21, the SSRF allocation provides a rare opportunity to access funding for strategic capital investments to

				address homelessness. The Province initially approved an SSRF Phase II allocation of \$4.5 million and on December 15 th , the City received confirmation of an additional \$5.5 million bringing the available funding to \$10 million.
Canada's COVID Economic Response Plan	Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC)	\$3.6 million	April, July, October 2020	<p>Communities are encouraged to use these additional Reaching Home funds to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend emergency COVID-19 measures 2. Invest in activities that promote housing stability 3. Undertake activities to prevent future inflows into homelessness <p>As part of the business case communities must clearly describe planned investments in housing placements / stability as well as activities that will help prevent homelessness, given their importance in containing the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Funds must be fully spent by March 31, 2021</p>
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	n/a	\$34,000	June 2020	No changes
COVID 19: Temporary Pandemic Pay (TPP)	MMAH	\$837,000	June 2020	Wage top up payments issued to 25 eligible employers with over 300 employees, including eligible City staff, for the period of April 24 to August 13, 2020.
Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)	Canada Mortgage & Housing	TBD – Application based	February 2021	The Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) provides funding to expedite the delivery of affordable housing units to vulnerable people in severe

	<p>Corporation (CMHC)</p>		<p>housing need specifically people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, or living in temporary shelters because of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>\$1 billion in funding is available through two separate streams 1) Major Cities and 2) Project. Windsor Essex falls under the project stream with access to \$500M, an application portal now open to governments, Indigenous governing bodies and organizations, and non-profit organizations where applications will be prioritized based on the strength of the application and due by December 31, 2020. Funds must be committed by March 31, 2021 with the initiative to target rapid housing and delivery of units within 12 months.</p> <p>CMHC will contribute up to 100% of funding to cover eligible residential construction costs. Modular construction or conversions/Rehabilitations. There were 8 RHI Applications submitted by Proponents in the Windsor and Essex service area. CMHC will make announcements on funding decisions in the month of February. There has not been any formal announcement on the delivery of a second stream of RHI funding.</p>
--	---------------------------	--	---

4.2 Goal 3: Ending Homelessness

Public Health guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 identified the need for people to safely isolate in their homes. Unfortunately, for persons experiencing homelessness, this is not possible. Many of the COVID related initiatives implemented throughout 2020 focused on improving collaborative partnerships across sectors in order to assist people moving from the street and temporary shelter into permanent affordable housing, with appropriate wrap around supports. Through system improvements, the

community has begun to see small reductions in the number of people actively experiencing homelessness and increases in the number of households housed.

Housing Services, in collaboration with community partners, continue to improve the fidelity and quality of data reported to the Windsor Essex By-Names Prioritized List. By doing so, this ensures every person experiencing homelessness is known in real time in an effort to ensure appropriate supports and services can be offered, (as available), as well as better identify gaps, trends and overall service needs.

Planned discharges from provincially funded institutions is also an area where improvements are being explored, based on best and promising practices.

The current outbreak has highlighted the importance of supporting people experiencing homelessness to secure and maintain permanent housing options and reduce the flow of intakes into the shelter system.

Councillor McKenzie refers to taking people out of homelessness and moving them into permanent housing recognizing how complex that process is. A debate exists around the role that outreach workers play and that process is not just providing supports in the programs that are being offered or the financial supports or bricks and mortar but there is that direct outreach piece that is a fundamental component of bringing people into permanent housing.

T. Moore responds that the outreach workers have an important role in housing support and there is a renewed focus on their work within the community. It is a key integral part of how we connect with people that are experiencing homelessness and how we develop trusting relationships to support them into permanent housing options. The importance of outreach workers is recognized; their work does not just involve going out and providing supports, but also connecting people with appropriate services so they can be successful in securing housing moving forward.

Councillor McKenzie thanks the staff in the Housing Department for the work being done during this current crisis.

4.2 Goal 6 – RentSmart

Housing Services and P2P continue to support the Educators who are delivering virtual training to residents of Windsor and Essex County during the pandemic. This program is part of the goals and strategies identified under the Home Together: Housing and Homelessness Master Plan. RentSmart offers education and support services to tenants and landlords with one goal: Successful Tenancies.

Since 2019, RentSmart education has helped over 800 (87 in 2020) renters and landlords across our region navigate the rental market, find housing and maintain tenancy. The education covers: finding suitable housing; tenant rights and

responsibilities; property owner responsibilities and expectations; maintenance do's and don'ts; communicating effectively; and budgeting and planning for affordable housing.

4.2 Goal 7 – Update on HIFIS

The Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4.0) is now live and is being utilized by the Welcome Centre to track and manage client files. We are working toward the goal of having 30+ homelessness serving agencies utilizing HIFIS by 2022.

Due to the emergency response required to manage the COVID related responses in the housing sector, the timeline for the work plan to implement HIFIS may be impacted. It is recognized that during a pandemic and emergency management activities, how important data management and data informed decisions are in the housing sector.

T. Moore suggests deferral of the “Review and Feedback on Draft HHMP Reporting Tools” to the next meeting

Moved by A. Yakonich, seconded by J. Brunet,

That the update relating to the Housing & Homelessness Master Plan – Goals 1 - **7 BE RECEIVED.**

Carried.

Councillor McKenzie leaves the meeting at 11:00 o'clock a.m.

4.3 HHAC Subcommittee

No report.

4.4 Updates from HHAC Members

F. Coughlin reports that their builds will begin in March, which includes four houses in Ford City on St. Luke and will house twenty-five people.

J. Steele states as part of their Regeneration Plan, the existing stock must be maintained. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as part of the National Housing Strategy has a program where Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation will complete necessary repairs to each of our developments and bundle them together under a program call Co-Investment Repair and Renew Program. We have brought partners to the table, which includes the City, County and Federal government. It is a ten-year plan with eight years remaining. The plan will be to invest \$170 M over the next eight years into our existing portfolio. Some of the existing targets that the Federal Government wants to address is accessibility and energy efficiency.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on June 22, 2021.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR