

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Minutes of the Council Workshop for the District of North Vancouver held at 5:01 p.m. on Monday, September 27, 2021 in the Council Chambers of the District Hall, 355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Present: Mayor M. Little
Councillor J. Back (via Zoom)
Councillor M. Bond (via Zoom)
Councillor M. Curren (via Zoom)
Councillor B. Forbes (via Zoom)
Councillor J. Hanson (via Zoom)
Councillor L. Muri

Staff: Mr. D. Stuart, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. G. Joyce, General Manager – Engineering, Parks & Facilities
Mr. D. Milburn, General Manager – Planning, Properties & Permits
Ms. S. Walker, General Manager – Corporate Services
Mr. R. Danyluk, Deputy General Manager – Finance & Deputy CFO
Ms. J. Paton, Assistant General Manager – Development Planning & Engineering
Ms. T. Atva, Manager – Community Planning
Mr. J. Gordon, Manager – Administrative Services
Mr. M. Hartford, Manager – Community Planning
Ms. C. Jackson, Manager – Climate Action, Natural Systems & Biodiversity
Ms. G. Lanz, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Mr. J. Cairns, Planner
Ms. A. Reiher, Council Liaison/Support Officer
Ms. S. Dale, Confidential Council Clerk
Ms. A. Dalley, Planner
Ms. E. Lee, Planner
Ms. S. Clarke, Committee Clerk

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.1. September 27, 2021 Council Workshop Agenda

MOVED by Councillor MURI

SECONDED by Councillor BACK

THAT the agenda for the September 27, 2021 Council Workshop is adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1. June 14, 2021 Council Workshop

MOVED by Councillor MURI

SECONDED by Councillor HANSON

THAT the minutes of the June 14, 2021 Council Workshop meeting are adopted.

CARRIED

2.2. July 12, 2021 Council Workshop

MOVED by Councillor MURI
SECONDED by Councillor HANSON

THAT the minutes of the July 12, 2021 Council Workshop meeting are adopted.
CARRIED

3. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL OR STAFF

3.1. Final Report from the Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force File No. 01.0360.20/078.000

Ms. Katherine Fagerlund and Mr. Phil Dupasquier, Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force (RSAHTF), presented the Final Report to Council to Address Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Issues.

Ms. Fagerlund and Mr. Dupasquier reviewed the Task Force's background and housing issues in the District including:

- Growth projections and goals in the 2011 Official Community Plan (OCP) did not address housing affordability;
- Candidate platforms in the 2018 General Local Election regarding OCP housing goals;
- Statements by candidates regarding development and the type of development needed in the District;
- Appointment of the committee by Council for a two-year period;
- Potential Federal and Provincial partnerships.
- Implementation of some of the recommendations in the committee's September 2020 Interim Report, including hiring a Housing Planner and reviewing District lands as possible affordable housing sites;
- The significant gap between incomes and the cost of rental housing;
- The disparity between the percentage of market and non-market units approved to the end of 2020 to meet 2030 estimates in the OCP; and,
- A loss of residents in all income groups below \$100,000 per year between 2011 and 2016.

The final report reaffirms the importance of the six rental and affordable housing goals outlined in the existing Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy (RAHS), and is structured according to these goals. Within each of the six goals, several recommendations are provided that may be used to inform future policy development, programs, planning and decision-making. In total, more than fifty recommendations are made across the six RAHS goal areas.

The committee grouped the six goals in the RAHS into two categories, with "Create new affordable housing" including Goals 1, 2 and 6: Expand the supply and diversity of housing, Expand the supply and new rental and affordable housing and Partner with other stakeholders to help delivery affordable housing; and "Protect existing affordable housing" including Goals 3, 4 and 5: Support maintenance and retention of existing affordable housing, Enable replacement of existing affordable housing with conditions, and Minimize impacts on tenants.

The final report offers several main recommendations in the Executive Summary which will help to assist the District in efforts to create affordable housing opportunities as well as protect existing affordable housing and tenants:

- Reduce barriers to innovation in housing form such as tiny homes;
- Support OCP goal of 10-25% of growth outside of Town Centres;
- Support the development of new and affordable housing rather than more market housing;
- Allocate Community Amenity Contributions (CAC's) from new market developments to a Housing Reserve Fund to be used exclusively for affordable housing;
- Ensure residential redevelopment provides a benefit to the community;
- Support the Housing Planner's role as being oversight of the implementation of recommendations from the RAHS and the Task Force's reports;
- Identify and inventory any and all available land that can be used for affordable housing projects;
- Create partnerships to support affordable housing projects;
- Develop policies, procedures, and programs to protect or promote rental housing;
- Reduce the time required for approvals and permits for affordable housing projects; and,
- Consider improvements to the Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy, drawing upon best practices from other municipalities such as the City of Burnaby.

In addition, the final report offers several recommendations that the Task Force thinks will be helpful for the District to provide and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the status of the housing stock. The recommendations suggest the District should:

- Provide staff resources and leadership to work with a variety of different partners including First Nations, non-profits and church groups, develop creative solutions, and identify funding opportunities;
- Be mindful of the need for housing for First Nations peoples and acknowledge District land is on traditional First Nations territory;
- Raise standards for environmental sustainability of housing to ensure consistency for all developers and to reduce long-term operating costs;
- Support long-term housing solutions including standards of maintenance to retain existing affordable units;
- Acquire, maintain, and use up-to-date housing data including the number of bedrooms and basement suites to inform decision-making funding allocations, policy development and evaluation of goals and objectives of the RAHS;
- Improve citizen engagement on matters of land use and community planning, including the creation of an Advisory Planning Commission and a monitoring committee to follow up on the work of the RSAHTF;
- Define affordability and create a publicly accessible matrix of housing affordability in the District;
- Confirm assumptions on housing demand and affordability, including community context and if the addition of more units translates to more affordability; and,
- Monitor progress to increase transparency and assess future needs.

Ms. Fagerlund drew attention to the estimated demand for three housing forms in the District's Housing Continuum chart and questioned the lack of growth for these forms through the year 2030: Ownership – Co-op, Ownership – Co-housing and Affordable Home Ownership. She also commented on the Metro 2050 Draft Regional Growth Strategy, noting that District Council had expressed concern with growth needs described in the Metro 2050 report.

Mayor Little advised that the recommendations of the final report will require comprehensive review and a subsequent report back to Council with potential next steps. The recommendations of the final report and potential District actions will need to be assessed with consideration to the Corporate Plan, OCP Action Plan, Council's Strategic Directions, Housing Needs Report available resources, and current work plan.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Commended the efforts, expertise, experience and commitment of the Task Force;
- Spoke in support of the Final Report to Council to Address Rental, Social and Affordable Housing issues;
- Spoke regarding the stress involved with-finding and retaining rental housing, particularly for families and people with pets;
- Stated that the rental market is extremely expensive and many people have lost their rental housing to redevelopment;
- Commented on the growth projections in the District Housing Continuum chart and opined that more market housing is not needed;
- Commented on the OCP goals to protect light industrial and properties as well as older housing and make the community environmentally and economically sustainable going forward;
- Noted the gap between wages and housing costs;
- Suggested working with the neighbouring municipalities;
- Spoke in support of hiring a General Manager of Housing to work with partners, develop creative solutions, and identify funding opportunities;
- Suggested that the report presented should be a framework used on how to move forward;
- Suggested that Council meet with members of the Task Force for further discussions;
- Noted that the majority of North Vancouver is affected by affordable housing;
- Stated that affordable housing is reaching crisis level;
- Commented on the importance of building partnerships with senior levels of government and the challenges of working with their priorities and timelines;
- Noted that diverse housing is needed;
- Suggested the creation of an Advisory Planning Commission and a monitoring committee;
- Questioned if the Task Force assessed the need for smaller units;
- Noted that the older generations want to age in the community;
- Commented that the Official Community Plan contradicts these recommendations as it has an overarching goal of increasing housing choices to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes;
- Commented on the 2018 ballot question regarding affordable housing;

- Commented on the need to define affordable housing and noted that it may be defined differently by different housing partners including BC Housing and Metro Vancouver;
- Disagreed with the idea that additional market housing is not needed and agreed that more non-market housing is needed;
- Requested clarification on the proportion of market and non-market housing deficiencies in the RSAHTF presentation.
- Spoke to the importance of enhancing communication with the public;
- Suggested providing a matrix on the District's web page so that current information is presented in one place;
- Expressed concern with the lack of employment housing;
- Suggested working with First Nations;
- Commented on the challenges of obtaining current data;
- Expressed support for appointing a member of Council to any future housing committees;
- Expressed concern regarding the influence of foreign buyers on housing prices and that many foreign-owned properties are left vacant;
- Commented on the effect of land valuations on housing affordability and questioned how high market values will reach in the decades to come;
- Commented on the value of District land and utilizing coach houses;
- Stated that Federal and Provincial assistance is needed on the North Shore;
- Suggested working with the non-profit sector; and,
- Spoke to the capacity to build and the labour shortage in the trades sector.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members advised that they did not specifically address the disparity between rents paid by new and existing tenants in older rental buildings or whether this has an effect on affordability in older buildings.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members stated the following:

- Commented on the challenges of obtaining current data;
- Noted that it is not possible to assess and address some of the questions on affordability such as rent rates by length of tenancy without more data;
- Commented on the need for smaller units such as tiny homes and secondary suites and suggested this be further investigated;
- Expressed concern regarding the Flexible Planning Framework for Lynn Valley;
- Reminded Council that the OCP calls for 10 to 25 percent of growth outside of Town Centres; and,
- Commented that the Official Community Plan contradicts the recommendations and itself as it has an overarching goal of increasing housing choices of meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members discussed challenges and highlighted the following:

- The task force met approximately fifty times in two years;
- It is comprised of eleven members representing a mixture of ideas and perspectives;

- Spoke to the staff turnover and advised three staff liaisons were appointed to the task force during their term;
- Complained that minutes were changed by staff before being posted to the District website;
- Commented on the relationship between District staff, committee members and Council;
- Suggested that a member of Council be appointed to the task force to give it more strength; and,
- Expressed concern with regards to the difficulty of obtaining data and information from staff and the need to have Council intervene.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members stated the following:

- Spoke to the increased real estate prices on the North Shore;
- Commented on steps by other levels of government to control factors affecting prices such as foreign ownership, money laundering and vacant homes;
- Commented that District residents were more economically diverse in the past;
- Suggested partnering with BC Housing;
- Stated that Federal and Provincial assistance is needed on the North Shore; and,
- Suggested identifying District-owned land that would be suitable for affordable housing and rezoning at higher density for affordable housing, noting that Council will need to deal with NIMBYism.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members stated the following:

- Urged staff to work with the non-profit sector;
- Commented that the non-profit sector will charge rents that are needed to maintain the building;
- Opined that if the District continues to build market rent housing the District will continue to build unaffordable housing;
- Noted that the non-profit sector will not increase rent when turnover happens;
- Commented on the need for land and money; and,
- Spoke to the urgency of addressing affordable housing issues.

In response to a question from Council, the Task Force members stated the following:

- Noted that the number of people per dwelling is decreasing;
- Commented that the North Shore has an aging population;
- Suggested that the changing consumption of housing needs to be looked at carefully;
- Acknowledged that the cost of construction has increased significantly;
- Noted that the trades industry does not want to commute to the North Shore;
- Expressed concern regarding the capacity to build affordable housing in the District; and,
- Noted that senior levels of government are going to be restrained because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Public Input:

Mr. Herman Mah:

- Thanked the Task Force for their hard work;
- Suggested expanding appropriate types of housing, including rent-to-own;
- Opined that if the District focuses on rental-only housing, residents won't be able to get ahead;
- Commented that existing policies and bylaws need to be reviewed;
- Suggested gentle densification through coach houses and secondary suites and recommended allowing both housing forms on individual properties; and,
- Commented that working with other partners is an important solution to build a better community.

Mr. Peter Teevan:

- Complained that he was not allowed to appear before the RSAHTF;
- Commented on the structure of the committee and its relationship to District staff, residents and stakeholders;
- Encouraged Council to ask more questions;
- Advised that he has information on factors affecting affordability;
- Spoke in support of the proposed recommendations; and,
- Commented on the need to specifically define the term affordable housing and ensure it is used consistently.

MOVED by Councillor MURI

SECONDED by Mayor LITTLE

THAT the September 1, 2021 report of the Community Planner entitled Final Report from the Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force is received for information;

AND THAT staff is directed to report back to Council on the action items recommended in the September 1, 2021 report of the Community Planner entitled Final Report from the Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force.

CARRIED

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor MURI

SECONDED by Mayor LITTLE

THAT the September 27, 2021 Council Workshop is adjourned.

CARRIED

(6:50 p.m.)

Mayor

Municipal Clerk