



RENTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 8, 2017

A meeting of the Renters Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at 5:34 pm, in Committee Room 1, Third Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

PRESENT: Karen Sawatzky, Chair
Karen Ameyaw, Vice-Chair
Natasha Edgar
Annie Martin
Samrah Mian
Noah Quastel*
Maddison Spennath
Meseret Taye*
Andrea Winkler

ABSENT: Andrew Sakamoto (Leave of Absence)
Daniel Oleksiuk
Jaraad Marani

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Anderson, Housing Policy, Staff Liaison

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Denise Swanston, Committee Clerk

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Samrah Mian
SECONDED by Karen Ameyaw

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee approve a Leave of Absence for Andrew Sakamoto for today's meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Noah Quastel and Meseret Taye absent for vote)

1. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Samrah Mian
SECONDED by Andrea Winkler

THAT the Minutes of the Renters Advisory Committee meeting held September 13, 2017, be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Noah Quastel and Meseret Taye absent for vote)

2. Chair's Update

The Chair provided brief updates on the following:

- Council of Councils
- Short Term Rentals Public Hearing
- Housing Vancouver
- Temporary Modular Housing
- End of "Vacate clauses"
- Census Rental Information

Graham Anderson, Staff Liaison, noted that there is a report going to Council regarding Community Amenity Contributions, specifically related to rental housing, as well as another report on the discretionary powers of the director of planning related to Temporary Modular Housing

3. Discussion of Motion - Rental Housing on Arterials

The Committee discussed the motion and incorporated feedback received from staff and committee members. Following discussion it was,

MOVED by Maddison Spennath
SECONDED by Natasha Edgar

WHEREAS

1. Recognized health experts and peer-reviewed research indicate that living within 100-150 meters of an arterial roadway is associated with increased risk of developing health conditions, including respiratory symptoms and cardiovascular problems, dementia, and increased incidence of low birth-weight babies and premature births, which is largely attributed to increased exposure to nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter from vehicle exhaust.
2. According to Metro Vancouver's 2017 Caring for the Air report, over 20% of the region's population lives within 100 m of a major roadway.

3. People living on arterials are also exposed to higher levels of traffic noise, which is also known to have detrimental health effects.
4. The city's Rental 100 program, as well as other plans and strategies, encourage the creation of new purpose-built rentals within 100 meters of arterials.
5. Approximately 76% of the city's residential land is currently zoned in a way that prohibits the construction of new purpose-built apartment buildings.
6. Renters want and deserve the opportunity and space to live on quiet, less polluted residential streets, not just noisier and more polluted arterial routes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver's Renters Advisory Committee recommends that City Council:

- A. Continue investigating ways to reduce traffic emissions along arterials.
- B. Direct staff to continue investigating ways that new, long-term and secure rental housing can be built on non-arterial residential streets;
- C. Direct staff to investigate ways to create secure long-term rental housing on non-arterial streets, including but not limited to pilot projects to demonstrate how small, purpose-built apartment buildings could be built on standard-sized city lots.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Discussion of Motion - SRO Housing

After discussion the Committee decided to complete additional research and return with the motion at a later date.

5. Discussion of Motion - Temporary Modular Housing

The Committee discussed the motion and incorporated feedback received from staff and committee members. Following discussion it was....

MOVED by Andrea Winkler
SECONDED by Samrah Mian

WHEREAS

1. The Provincial government has committed \$66 million in funding towards 600 units of temporary modular housing;
2. Homelessness and housing insecurity are among the most significant issues in Vancouver today;
3. The 2017 Metro Vancouver homeless count found 2,138 sheltered and unsheltered homeless in Vancouver (which didn't include people sleeping in vehicles);
4. In a prosperous city like Vancouver, no one should have to sleep outside at night;
5. No residents have the right to ban others from living in a neighbourhood;
6. Those on the street often suffer from disabilities, chronic health issues, trauma, and addictions;
7. The first step to improving quality of life and getting back on one's feet is having stable housing;
8. The Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency has a mandate to create 2,500 housing units on City-owned land by 2021, and as of mid-2017 it has about 1,000 units in various stages of development;
9. Temporary modular homes are a fast way to provide housing to those at risk of homelessness in a city where vacant land is scarce;
10. Temporary modular housing can make use of land awaiting development that is currently vacant or underused;
11. There is land in the city that could accommodate temporary modular homes that is currently vacant or underused;
12. Homeless people and people at risk of homelessness already live, and have a right to live, in all neighbourhoods of the city;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Renters Advisory Committee supports the development of, at a minimum, 600 temporary modular housing units on sites throughout the City of Vancouver.

FURTHER THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends that council direct staff to accept this motion of support as part of the public consultation process on all temporary modular housing development applications to house homeless people or people at risk of homelessness over the next two years.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Discussion of Motion - City Budget

MOVED by Karen Sawatzky
SECONDED by Karen Ameyaw

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver is currently in the process of setting its budget and financial priorities for 2018 and future years;
2. For 2017, the City's operating budget was approximately \$1.3 billion and its capital budget was approximately \$486 million;
3. Homelessness continues to grow in Vancouver;
4. There continue to be serious health, safety, and maintenance issues at many privately owned Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels in the Downtown Eastside; and
5. The conversion of long-term rental housing to short-term tourist accommodation undermines the security of renters and the City's efforts to improve the rental vacancy rate.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends that Council fund and prioritize the following:

- A. Tenant and advocacy groups that inform low-income and other renters about their rights, and help renters keep their housing;
- B. The ongoing purchase of privately owned SRO hotels;
- C. The ongoing purchase and use of land for housing that is offered to tenants at below-market rates;
- D. An adequate number of property use inspectors to respond promptly to complaints about health and safety issues in SRO hotels as well as illegal short-term rentals; and
- E. The Vancouver Rent Bank.

CARRIED
(Noah Quastel opposed)

7. 2018 Meeting Schedule

MOVED by Noah Quastel
SECONDED by Samrah Mian

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee approve the 2018 Renters Advisory Committee meeting schedule as circulated, with an adjustment of moving the February 14 working session to February 21, 2018.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. Member Updates

Members shared updates relevant to the committee including a brief update on the Parking meeting hosted by VCPC; the Vacate clause; and, the Vancouver SRO Tenant Convention.

9. New Business

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Karen Ameyaw
SECONDED by Maddison Spennath

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: January 24, 2017
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Room 115, Main Floor
Vancouver City Hall

The Committee adjourned at 7:33 pm.

* * * * *