

## Retail Gentrification and Social Inclusion Working Group Notes

July 13, 2016

*In Attendance:* Elizabeth Ballyantyne (DTES Neighbourhood House), Jean Swanson (CCAP), Diana Manzi (HxBIA), Momoko Ito (Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall, Advocacy and Outreach Committee - Powell St Festival) Andres O. Oswill (Student for CCAP), Judy McGuire (Ray Cam, Reboot), Wes Regan (City of Vancouver), Kiri Bird (CEDSAAC/LEDlab), Alisha Maxfield (CEDSAAC)

*Regrets:* Pete Fry (SRA), Landon Hoyt (HxBIA), Hendrik Buene (Village Vancouver), Ed Takanaki, Moira Yuen (Chinatown BIA)

### 1) Intro and Check In:

CED Coordinator introduced herself and previous experience/connection to the DTES community. Round of introductions of group members.

### 2) Approval of Agenda:

Everyone agreed with the agenda for the day with nods, and no further suggestions.

### 3) Approval of minutes:

Minutes can be published on the CED portion of the CoV website.

A quick overview of previous minutes was done.

**Action Item:** Need to add the purpose statement for the group into the minutes, and add "low income" throughout purpose statement.

CCAP will not have their survey done until September. CCAP was asked how the committee could send a draft of recommendations without the survey. Wes informed committee that he will go to council with whatever the committee is capable of bringing. It will be a multi-phase process over the next 3 years.

Many ideas were put forward from April 8 about policy initiatives, same information was taken to council; which included:

- Working with BC Housing on social enterprise, low income serving businesses.
- Revitalization Tax Exemption Program:

There is no opposition from BIAs. BIAs want to know: what potential impact may be to the general retail community? How many building retail spaces is the committee considering? What are the impacts, and unintended consequences?

Question: Has there been work to show that the tax break could stop rent increases, and protect and retain affordable retail spaces?

This is a next step for CoV, need to define “low income serving businesses”. The Neighbourhood Fit tool will play a role, employment based social enterprise, First Nations owned/operated businesses, businesses in Chinatown (CoV is particularly concerned about Chinatown).

There are many questions being brought to council about funding and researching the tax break. If long term leases can be secured they are sheltered from year to year rent increases when property value spikes.

Question: What is a community contributing business?

The 3C model regulates that 60% of profits goes back into the mission based activities of the social enterprise, with the other 40% returning to investors. (David LePage with Buy Social is a 3C model organization).

Would like to include the 3C model in the tax exemption program.

The charter does not allow subsidizing of private businesses.

It was recommended by several members that low income individuals participate in this meeting, and that their concerns are a priority. Perhaps a town hall meeting or forum could happen and the working group can invite community members to attend and engage.

Question: The group was asked if everyone was familiar with the retail cohort strategy idea?

People did not need clarification on the BC Housing retail cohort, as it was introduced at the June CEDSAC meeting.

#### **4) CED Planner Update:**

Waiting to hear back from BC Housing about next steps and partnerships. BC Housing is proposing a non-profit retail and tenant property management company. BC Housing would partner with CoV and Vancity Foundation (possibly). We would like thoughts from this committee. Need ideas of priority businesses that could be taken on. Would like to include community voices on the executive advisory board.

The idea is that the entity has the leases of 63 housing units, (15 in DTES) within BC Housing.

Need to locate businesses for long term tenancy. Can we inquire long term leases in private spaces? Want to ensure the community is involved in setting the agenda for the entity.

Question: To whom- to the community? It would be good to have low income folks on the governing body, as representatives. If there is a community advisory committee, would like that majority to be people with low income.

Question: What are the 15 retail spaces in the DTES? Is it old stock, or longer life buildings?

It will be mixed, many buildings will be rehabilitated and new buildings will be constructed as well. Many of the 15 sites are zoned to have commercial retail on the ground floor, the question is how do we ensure that what goes in the space makes sense with the mission?

Question: When and how will we get an inventory of the businesses we keep and which are lost?

Invoices have been resolved for both retail surveys, Judy and Jean need to invoice Ecotrust, Kiri will follow up.

The research information is essential, as Chinatown Concern Group, Shiba, The Ma Foundation, June Chow, Melissa Fong are looking at land trusts. Japanese Community are looking at viable buildings on Powell St.

**Action Item:** Momoko to provide more information on above question.

Question: Would it be wise to work with non-profits and coordinate with their retail space for use?

Many nods in agreement from members.

A comment was made that many community groups feel burned, regarding the community consultation process, particularly around heritage buildings.

Wes highlighted that the committee has an opportunity to shape the program with BC Housing and ensuring that community voices are represented.

Question: Will the community input be real?

Yes

Question: Should we invite the Japanese land group to the the BC Housing meeting?

The inclusion of Japanese Canadian heritage as a part of the group purpose was briefly discussed. The committee would like to acknowledge and conserve Japanese Canadian heritage and history in the community.

**Action Item:** Momoko will forward the minutes to the Japanese Canadian Community Building Group. Was suggested that the Japanese Canadian Community Building Group join this sub committee in the future. All members agreed.

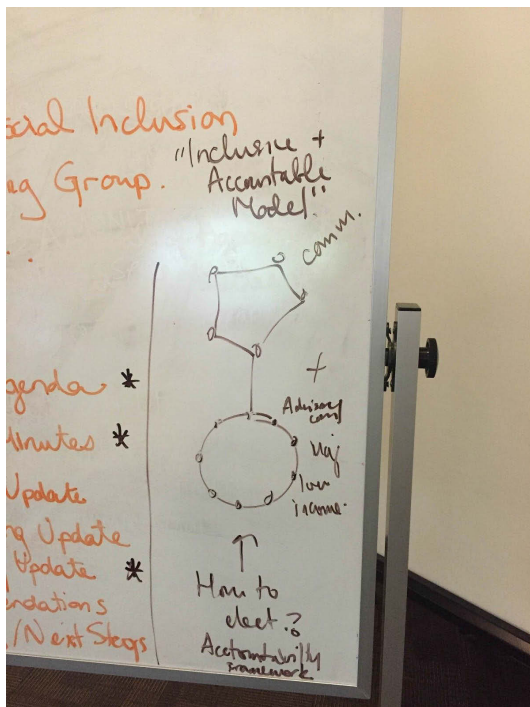
Question: Is this a done deal with BC Housing? Is it top down provincial directive, or is the community being engaged?

Craig Crawford, has seen the retail gentrification happening, and is asking why McDonald Realty leases to just any general businesses. Would like to ensure that the tenants and non profit housing providers needs are being reflected better in leasing these spaces out to the right businesses. An advisory board is wanted.

### **2 Options to consider:**

a) How might the community be involved in the governance of this vehicle? Option 1 BCH, CoV, Vancouver Foundation , reps chosen by the community be in the high level governance area

b) BCH, CoV provide direction to the advisory community, and majority land trusts



Both options are different in terms of power, and a robust explanation and research is required of each.

Question: Should the committee research and explain the above options to CoV and BC Housing, or is it a more collaborative approach?

Both options are good to bring to BC Housing.

BC Housing has said they want a community advisory committee, and ask that this be comprised of majority low income voices as well as families, seniors,-need to know who they are accountable to.

Could combine the two options, and make an executive advisory committee with executive representatives involved as well. This would allow for different levels of engagement.

Suggested that BC Housing attends our upcoming meeting and we can share concerns and hopes of the model, and discuss what the process is for electing/appointing community members. What will be the accountability framework? What kind of metrics, data gathering, and reports would be available?

Question: Where do people see social enterprise represented in the 2 options?

A comment was made that the overall poverty that exists in the DTES cannot be solved solely by people working in social enterprises. Many of the residents include children or individuals who have complexities that do not allow them to work. The employment piece could be more secondary.

A new discussion ensued about City of Vancouver property audit - can CoV use its own properties the same way BC Housing is? Vancity might help with an assessment of City owned properties. Perhaps someone like Vancity could help with data monitoring to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the community, considering the following:

- How many people are being employed
- How many people are the businesses serving
- What spaces are currently vacant and available in terms of CoV and property

Kira and Vancity will provide a full inventory of what the City of Vancouver owns, what they are doing with the properties and what is available, as well as what leases are coming available.

This sub committee should talk to the Vancity Community Foundation, and potentially BC Housing could participate in this inventory.

Comment that if there is a deal with BC housing for low income serving storefronts in their buildings there needs to be some legal agreement that this continues if BC housing sells the property as they have a propensity to do.

**Action Item:** Wes will look into Judy's suggestion that any private company that rents a certain amount of their property through the land trust vehicle can they get a tax deduction.

## **5) LEDlab/CED Planner update on Meeting w/ Vancity Social Purpose Retail Group**

The ask of the committee was a need for a community vehicle to administer the funds, CEDSAC engaged with the Vancity Real Estate purpose group.

Vancity thought the partnership between community, BC Housing, and CoV made sense, and highlight that it was important to have the community involved in the governance of the new vehicle concept.

## **6) Retail Survey Update:**

CCAP had a town hall meeting about what is an affordable, accessible business. The checklist draft from town hall has been trialled and getting more input and feedback from the community.

It is crucial to do a process with Chinatown residents, this checklist did not capture everything they wanted in a business. This process should be done with every group.

The service component, was felt to be too general, need to break this down into specifics, which means more forms are needed.

**Checklist limitation:** Does capture the cost of goods, the individual's experience, and does not answer the question of what people need.

What people need could be separate from the survey.

## **7) Drafting/reviewing recommendations for CED Planner Report to Council**

Policy recommendations regarding zoning, CoV needs to enforce this. (separate policy discussion).

Policy review is still being updated.

These are recommendations for asks to council to move forward and Wes could try and start some of the recommendations now.

The “hire a consultant” recommendation language be changed to “hire a community advisory committee” ?

A statement page could be made, as to what the proposed BC Housing social purpose real estate institution/retail idea needs. The committee can present information as to where we are at in clarifying the governance structure, the need to involve the community in the process, and maintaining accountability.

Recommendation c) needs to say the low income community.

**Action item:** Elizabeth, Andrea, Kiri, Alisha will work on statement as to where the committees heads are at regarding BC Housing retail.

**Defining legacy business:** Different from what heritage is doing, more about what the retail gentrification and low income businesses are doing.

Question: Why are we highlighting legacy business? It is what the low income community needs?

Answering what a legacy business is, will support development on the Neighbourhood Fit Tool, provide information about what is important regarding a legacy building.

Suggested that it should be about what the building does, not what we call it. Is this category meaningful.....this may be redundant, may not need it.

Discussing and defining legacy business gives us “teeth” around the heritage issue. San Francisco created a legacy business retention program (30 year old businesses), can get access to preferential funds. Would like to take this intent, and create programming in the city around that. So if we can define what a legacy building is, it can remain separate from heritage.

There is a need to define what businesses the community would like to see that do not exist yet.

**Suggestion:** Legacy business could be defined as serving people with low income, plus age of business/building, and the length of time that the business has been in the community.

Funding is needed for legacy business succession planning.

**Solution:** Ask for additional funding to continue research into low income serving businesses and have a phase two of the research that CCAP is already doing.

## **8) Next Meeting and Next Steps**

Tabled for next meeting, Pete Fry can provide an updated report on what he is doing with the SRA retail survey.

The 4th item on recommendation list did not get discussed. The committee and Vancity should talk, and Wes can support this.

**Action Item:** Kiri to follow up with Vancity about CoV property audit.

**Next meeting:** August 10 at 1pm-3pm at the Amp. Everyone is able to attend, except Jean. An invite will be sent out via email by CED coordinator.

Meeting adjourned at 2:56pm