



OLDER PERSONS AND ELDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 26, 2023

A meeting of the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee was held on Friday, January 26, 2024, at 10:00, in the Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT:

Marc White, Chair
Susan Scott Gabe, Vice-Chair
Sana Aziz
Warren Chan
Richard Earthy
Varouj Gumuchian
Linda Johnston
Andrea Krombein
Dale Lutes
Andrea Sara
Tricia Sirrs
Kara Turner

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Christine Boyle, Council Liaison
Anthony Kupferschmidt, Strategic Lead, Older Persons,
Staff Liaison
Diane Gibney, Alternate Member
Marion Pollack, Alternate Member

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:

Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies
Ana Denissenko, Committee Clerk

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

Leave of Absence Requests

None.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Richard Earthy
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Friday, November 24, 2023, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Consent agenda

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve the Consent Agenda as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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VARY AGENDA

MOVED by Richard Earthy
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee vary the agenda to hear item 6, Liaison Updates after item 2, Chair Report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
AND BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

For clarity, the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

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2. Chair Report

The Chair welcomed the new Staff Liaison and Committee member, and provided an update on the use of consent agenda.

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Richard Earthy

WHEREAS City procedures prevent the intended efficiencies of the consent agenda, and adoption or approval of subcommittee and related informational reports is not required;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee agrees to pilot the use of an alternative approach to the Consent Agenda, in which all information reports are circulated and requests for clarification are provided in advance, the minutes note that the reports were received, and any further discussion takes place within allotted agenda time.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Liaison Updates

The Council Liaison provided an update and welcomed the Strategic Lead, Older Persons.

The Staff Liaison provided an update and responded to questions.

3. OPEAC Policy Regarding Providing Letters of Support

MOVED by Richard Earthy
SECONDED by Kara Turner

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve the OPEAC Policy Regarding Providing Letters of Support as amended.

CARRIED
(Linda Johnston abstained from the vote)

4. Motions

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee amend the work plan to replace the term “churches” with “faith-based organizations.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve the work plan as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Recommending Mayor and Council send a letter to the Province supporting recommendations arising from the BC Seniors’ Advocate’s September 2022 Report

MOVED by Richard Earthy
SECONDED by Linda Johnston

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver’s Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee’s (OPEAC) mandate is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for older persons and elders to fully participate in City services and civic life.
2. Based on data from the 2021 census, senior-led households are overrepresented in the low-income category compared to all other households in the City of Vancouver.

3. The City Manager's office report from Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services dated May 26, 2023 indicated that 30% of older persons aged 65-69 who are renters are in core housing need, a figure which rises to 38% in the 70-74 age group and 42% in the 80-84 age group.
4. The BC Seniors Advocate in her report entitled, "[*Seniors Falling Behind*](#)" published in September 2022 conducted a systemic review of the impact of rising costs of living on older persons in BC who depend on government pensions and ranked the province last in comparison with other jurisdictions in Canada with respect to financial support for older persons and elders.
5. The BC Seniors Advocate report also highlighted the following key facts with respect to housing affordability for older persons and elders in BC:
 - 90% of older persons receive pension income from Old Age Security (OAS) and the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and 28% receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). On average, these pensions provide an annual income of \$22,649.
 - The BC Seniors Supplement, a financial support provided by the province for the lowest income older persons, was doubled last year to a maximum of \$99 per month but is the fourth lowest in the country and not indexed to inflation.
 - In the last 10 years, market rents have increased by 50% and the allowable rent increase jumped 34%, while pension incomes have risen just 25% over the same period.
 - The SAFER program is failing in its goal of 30% of income to be spent on rent. Currently, SAFER recipients paying the average rent for a 1 bedroom in Vancouver will spend over 60% of their income on rent and 80% of SAFER recipients have incomes of less than \$25,000.
 - The average wait time for a Seniors' Supportive Housing unit is three years, which has increased by 50% in the last 5 years. Only 8% of applicants on the wait list were placed in a unit last year, with 17% of applicants waiting over five years.
 - 49% of low-income senior homeowners report they cannot afford needed major repairs for safety or accessibility.
 - In BC, 84% of low-income older persons reported running out of money to buy food some of the time and there was a 78% increase in the use of food banks by older persons in the last five years.
6. The provincial government has not yet acted on the BC Seniors' Advocate recommendations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) recommends that Mayor and Council send a letter to the Government of British Columbia supporting the following recommendations from the BC Seniors' Advocate September 2022 Report that address the income and housing needs of older persons:

- Index the BC Seniors Supplement to inflation consistent with other income supports such as GIS/OAS and CPP.

- Increase awareness of the Property Tax Deferral Program and examine an expansion of the program for low- and modest-income seniors to defer other costs such as strata fees, hydro costs and other municipal charges. Examine how seniors living in co-operative housing might be able to take advantage of the program.
- Develop a program to assist low- and modest-income seniors with major home repairs.
- Eliminate the daily rate for publicly funded home support services.
- Provide an annual province-wide bus pass for all seniors that includes HandyDART. The fee for the pass could be based on a sliding scale matched to income.
- Provide an extended health benefit for seniors that includes eyeglasses, hearing aids, mobility aids and necessary medical equipment. The cost of the plan could be covered by premiums based on income, ensuring it is an affordable option for all B.C. seniors.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to build the capacity of seniors' centres across B.C. to better support social engagement and help support older people access the supports and services they need to continue to live independently.
- Redesign the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to reflect the current reality of the B.C. rental market and ensure yearly rent increases are recognized.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Recommending Council support a renewed focus on social, supportive, and non-market housing

MOVED by Andrea Sara
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver's Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee's (OPEAC) mandate is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for older persons and elders to fully participate in City services and civic life.
2. ABC in their Election Platform committed to support a renewed focus on Social, Supportive and Non-Market Housing.
3. The City Manager's office report from Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services dated May 26, 2023 indicated that 30% of older persons aged 65-69 who are renters are in core housing need, a figure which rises to 38% in the 70-74 age group and 42% in the 80-84 age group.
4. Older persons represent 22% of those that are homeless and are the fastest demographic at risk for homelessness.
5. Most independent and supportive seniors housing units being built by the private sector do not serve low-income seniors and there is a greater need to build capacity of non-profit independent and supportive housing.
6. The City of Vancouver has committed to developing a Seniors Housing Strategy that will better address the needs of all older persons and elders.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

A. THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) recommends that Mayor and Council operationalize the following ABC Election Platform commitments on Social, Supportive, and Non-Market Housing:

- Encourage the construction of community-directed, culturally appropriate housing for older persons and elders and develop concrete strategies for aging in place.
- Develop an overarching 20-year social and supportive housing plan for the City in partnership with BC Housing and other housing partners.
- Champion the role of non-profits in the delivery of housing and strengthen protections and supports for Vancouver's existing market and non-market housing rental stock.
- Increase the City of Vancouver's social and supportive housing investments congruent with this plan working with community, public and private foundations, and non-profit developers.
- Double the number of co-operative (co-op) housing units in Vancouver within the next four years.
- Pilot housing for youth and youth aging out of care in partnership with BC Housing.
- Pilot a culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led supportive housing and wellness centre project in partnership with Indigenous peoples.
- Pre-identify locations in the city where density bonuses can be given to developers to accommodate the construction of additional non-market housing.
- Reopen and then update the Downtown Eastside Area Plan in partnership with community members, BC Housing, First Nations, and service providers.
- Collaborate with providers to deliver additional housing units for those living with developmental disabilities.
- Negotiate with the Federal and Provincial governments to remove GST, PST, and other development-and-construction-impacting taxes, like the property transfer tax for purpose-built rental housing, social housing, and supportive housing.

B. THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommends that, rather than base increased investment into social housing using Consumer Price Index, begin by developing the 20-year plan according to needs and specific targets, and consider levels of investment and opportunities for co-investment in the context of a long-term vision.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Preserving the Footprint of Social Housing for Non-Profit Housing

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver's Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee's (OPEAC) mandate is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for older

persons and elders to fully participate in City services and civic life.

2. In January 2023, Scotiabank released a report calling on governments in Canada to double the country's stock of social housing, defined as housing where rent is set at 30 per cent of household income.
3. Currently, Canada is an outlier amongst Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries: social housing makes up about 3.5 per cent of Canada's housing stock, as compared to the OECD average of 7 per cent. At the same time, housing affordability continues to deteriorate across the country, with asking market rents rising between 12-25 per cent over 2021-2022.
4. Preserving the current footprint of non-profit housing and increasing density will more rapidly address the affordability gap that older residents in the City of Vancouver are experiencing.
5. The City Manager's office report from Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services dated May 26, 2023 indicated that 30% of older persons aged 65-69 who are renters are in core housing need, a figure which rises to 38% in the 70-74 age group and 42% in the 80-84 age group.
6. Given demographic projections we need to expand both the footprint available for social housing, as well as increase housing density.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommends that Mayor and Council ensure that non-profit housing providers who planned, developed, financed, and operated affordable housing on city land leases are given first opportunity to redevelop higher density non-profit housing on their existing footprint using a phased redevelopment approach (when redevelopment is necessary), with a goal to minimize displacement, working in collaboration with other non-profit housing developers, as well as to preserve and retrofit existing deeply affordable housing as long as possible.

CARRIED

(Marc White abstained from the vote)

5. 2024 Meeting Schedule

The Committee engaged in discussion.

7. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee Chairs provided updates from their respective Subcommittees, further to the circulated reports.

MOVED by Susan Scott Gabe

SECONDED by Tricia Sirrs

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee appoint Sana Aziz as Co-Chair of the Community Programs and Services (CPS) Subcommittee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. New Business

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Tricia Sirrs
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Friday, March 22, 2024
TIME: 10:00 am
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall
/ Webex Online

The Committee adjourned at 11:46 am.

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