



OLDER PERSONS AND ELDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

July 19, 2024

A meeting of the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee was held on Friday, July 19, 2024, at 10:01 AM, via electronic means.

PRESENT:

Marc White, Chair
Susan Scott Gabe, Vice-Chair
Sana Aziz*
Warren Chan
Richard Earthy
Varouj Gumuchian
Linda Johnston
Dale Lutes
Andrea Sara

ABSENT:

Tricia Sirrs (Leave of Absence)
Kara Turner (Leave of Absence)
Andrea Krombein (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Christine Boyle, Council Liaison
Councillor Mike Klassen, Council Liaison
Detective Constable Anna Grigoletto, Vancouver Police
Department Liaison
Mark Koep, Vancouver Public Library Liaison
Trustee Jennifer Reddy, Vancouver School Board Liaison
Anthony Kupferschmidt, Strategic Lead, Older Persons,
Staff Liaison
Diane Gibney, Alternate Member
Marion Pollack, Alternate Member

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:

Julie Emmerson, Committee Clerk

*Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-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

MOVED by Linda Johnston

SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Tricia Sirrs, Kara Turner, and Andrea Krombein for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Dale Lutes
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Friday, May 17, 2024, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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VARY AGENDA

MOVED by Richard Earthy
SECONDED by Linda Johnston

THAT the Committee vary the agenda to hear item 2: Chair and Vice-Chair Report first, followed by item 4: Liaison Updates.

FURTHER THAT the Committee vary the agenda to hear item 6: New Business, after item 1: Motions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND BY
THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

For ease of reference, the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

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2. Chair and Vice-Chair Report

The Chair and Vice-Chair provided reports.

4. Liaison Updates

The Council Liaisons provided updates and responded to questions and comments, highlighting the [Seniors Housing Strategy](#).

The Staff Liaison provided updates and responded to questions and comments.

The Vancouver School Board Liaison provided updates.

The Vancouver Police Board Liaison provided an introduction.

The Vancouver Public Library Liaison circulated written updates prior to the meeting.

1. Motions

Motion 1: To confirm OPEAC's approval of written submission by Susan Scott Gabe on E- Scooters contract.

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee confirm e-vote regarding Susan Scott Gabe preparing and submitting a written submission regarding July 10, 2024, Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities, Item 4, Contract Award for Shared E-Scooter System Operator.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 2: To recommend that Council recognize the International Day of Older Persons

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Richard Earthy

WHEREAS

1. The International Day of Older Persons is recognized by the United Nations annually on October 1 since 1990;
2. October 1 is also recognized as National Seniors Day by the Government of Canada;
3. Many municipalities in British Columbia recognize older persons on October 1 every year;
4. Vancouver City Council's Strategic Priorities 2023-2026 include ensuring Vancouver is a seniors-friendly, accessible City;
5. International days are occasions to educate the public, mobilize resources and celebrate achievements;
6. Recognition of days of significance is aligned with the Communication and Information domain of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities Framework; and
7. The International Day of Older Persons is not currently an Official Celebration and Observance of the City of Vancouver.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that Council recognize the International Day of Older Persons as an Official Celebration of the City of Vancouver.

FURTHER THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct staff to recognize the International Day of Older Persons with a proclamation, illuminations, and internal and external communications.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 3: To recommend the City of Vancouver to support the five recommendations arising from the BC Seniors Advocate Report

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

WHEREAS

1. There is an urgent need for the prevention, mitigation of homelessness and improved planning and co-ordination to address the needs of vulnerable seniors;
2. The BC Seniors Advocate most recent report: '*Ageing Matters*' notes the following:
 - B.C. seniors on fixed incomes are disproportionately impacted by the high cost of living and unable to absorb increased costs for housing, food, medical equipment, mobility aids and other necessities for healthy ageing;
 - Seniors in homeless shelters and food bank line ups now appear to be commonplace. Inflation has hit seniors on fixed incomes hard with the cost of living being unaffordable for many;
 - The most precarious group of seniors are the 1 in 5 who rent;
 - The provincial government's Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters, or SAFER, rent subsidy program does not address the financial pressures experienced by seniors who rent, especially when the average income of people who receive SAFER was just \$20,844 last year;
 - low-income seniors subject to 'renovictions', it can be catastrophic and trying to find a new place to live in today's rental market;
 - Many seniors and their loved ones don't know where to go for support when they need it or even where to start. The supports and programs for seniors are fragmented and uncoordinated, spread across several government ministries, health authorities and service providers;
3. The BC Advocate made 5 recommendations in their report that would help to prevent needless homelessness through improvements to income supports, improved access for health care services and support services as follows:

Recommendation 1. Redesigning the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters Program

- Provide immediate financial relief for low-income senior renters by redesigning the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program to ensure seniors pay 30% or less of their income for rent and the rent ceilings are indexed to inflation and adjusted to reflect the current reality of the rental market. The current SAFER subsidies are inadequate to make housing affordable for seniors.

Recommendation 2. Increase the Amount of BC Seniors Supplement (BCSS)

- Increase the amount of the BCSS and index the supplement to inflation consistent with other federal government income supports for seniors like CPP, OAS and GIS. This provincial subsidy remains the fourth lowest in Canada and most single seniors do not receive the full monthly subsidy amount of \$99.30. In fact, only 30% of single seniors receive the full subsidy each month. More seniors are experiencing hardships due to the rising costs of living in B.C., and more financial supports are urgently needed.

Recommendation 3. Eliminate The Daily Rate Charge for Home Support

- The daily rate charge for home support places a financial barrier for seniors to get the help they need to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. The daily rate is cost prohibitive for a large portion of the B.C. seniors' population. This will help reduce seniors moving into long-term care prematurely because of economic circumstances and provide relief for caregivers.

Recommendation 4. Provide the Shingles Vaccine at No Cost to B.C. Seniors

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends the provision of the shingles vaccine for individuals 50+. Seniors are more likely to get shingles and many low- and moderate-income seniors and seniors who do not have extended health benefits can face financial barriers to pay out-of-pocket for the costs of the vaccine. The Province should provide a shingles vaccine program at no cost to B.C. seniors.

Recommendation 5. Develop and Implement a Cross-Ministry Seniors Services Strategy and Action Plan

- Led by the Ministry of Health, develop and implement a cross-ministry strategy and action plan to strengthen the system of supports and services for seniors in B.C. with key targets and measures and annual public reporting on performance. With the rapid growth in the seniors' population, sectors such as health care and housing are largely unprepared for an ageing population and this growth will present significant challenges for all British Columbians in the years to come. Seniors' services in B.C. must be better coordinated amongst ministries who must work together to ensure older British Columbians are getting the support they need as they age. It is imperative that the Province demonstrates this leadership to prioritize the needs of seniors.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that the City of Vancouver advocate for the provincial government to implement the five recommendations arising from the BC Advocate report: Ageing Matters.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 4: To recommend urgent action to build partnerships to create and support a continuum of supportive housing options including seniors'-centred shelters to prevent and address the growing level of homelessness impacting older persons

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

WHEREAS

1. The recent CMHC Housing data is very sobering. There are currently 10,465 senior renters living in the City of Vancouver who are living below CMHC Housing Standards, and 16,215 renters aged 45 to 64 (near-age seniors) who are currently living below these same housing standards;
2. In BC, seniors are the fastest growing demographic of those that are homeless, as well as those on BC Housing waitlists. In Vancouver, seniors are now 22% of our homeless population with many being homeless for the first time at age 55;
3. OPEAC is also hearing from seniors' organizations and seniors' serving organizations in Vancouver who are facing an unprecedented demand for housing support services and immediate temporary seniors'-centred housing for persons 50 years and older who are homeless, becoming homeless or facing the real possibility of homelessness due to unaffordable rents, lack of safe appropriate affordable housing, their homes being torn down being evicted for "family use", and seniors facing financial setbacks to due illnesses or loss of employment, changes in family circumstances and other types of financial emergencies;
4. Given the health and emotional impact of being seniors being homeless for the first time, OPEAC has identified seniors-centred temporary housing as being one of its top priorities. OPEAC has defined seniors-centred temporary housing as the continuum of safe, affordable, supportive housing to house homeless seniors. This can include seniors-specific shelters, BC Housing Temporary Housing Program, various types of transitional housing programs, home share for seniors, temporary utilization of long-term care services, or other creative, alternative housing initiatives that move seniors who are homeless into housing ideally at the time of homelessness;
5. OPEAC's Housing Subcommittee has noted a strong interest from non-profit housing developers who are very concerned about this growing problem and interested in collaborating with the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, United Way, M'Akola Development Services, Lu'ma Development Management on creating innovative culturally appropriate solutions to address this unprecedented demand for seniors-centred temporary shelters and the need for permanent affordable housing for this vulnerable population;
6. On May 21, 2024, the Canadian Medical Journal released a new research report that outlined the magnitude of the large and growing public health and social challenge of older persons experiencing homelessness across Canada;
7. The report highlights many factors that contribute to this fastest growing demographic of those experiencing homelessness:
 - In 2021, 32% of people using shelters were aged 50 years and older across Canada not including the many older adults who were unsheltered, living outdoors, and experiencing hidden homelessness;
 - Lower, fixed income because of the transition to retirement or employment loss and insufficient incomes in general;

- A shortage of affordable and suitable housing;
 - Shortages of appropriate housing options, health, and social services to support older adults' ability to age in place, and vacancies in long-term care (LTC) homes further increase the risk of homelessness among older adults;
 - Missed rental payments and hoarding because of cognitive impairment can result in eviction;
 - Economic disadvantages including lifelong overt and structural racism affects income, employment, and other opportunities;
 - Gender differences in income and career trajectories contribute to a greater proportion of women than men with core housing needs (21% and 9%, respectively);
 - Dementia and other causes of cognitive impairment make it harder to navigate health care, social services, and housing systems, especially in the context of breakdowns in personal relationships or social networks;
 - Complex health states that occur more commonly in older age — such as dementia, frailty and falls, and chronic health conditions — also contribute to the risk of homelessness;
 - Research indicates that older persons experiencing homelessness have higher health care risks including prolonged hospital stays and a much higher risk (3.5 times higher) of premature death with the highest risk being those experiencing homeless for the first time later in life;
8. The report provides some specific guidance to both mitigate homelessness and support older persons experiencing homeless:
- For older adults experiencing homelessness, urgent development and expansion of housing models that support aging in the right place is needed;
 - Models should promote person-centred care that integrates mental and physical health care with housing and social support;
 - Important program elements include case management or care navigation, on-site harm-reduction and addiction support, assistance with activities of daily living while promoting life skills and independence, social and recreational programming, relationship building and fostering community, adaptable physical spaces, and staff that are available and empowered to care for older adults;
9. On July 4, 2024, Dan Levitt, BC's Seniors' Advocate released an urgent call for government action noting calls to their office from seniors who are facing unlawful rent increases have more than doubled in the last year and that immediate steps are needed to ensure the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to support this growing number of vulnerable seniors;

10. As noted in the Office of the BC Seniors Advocate report released in 2023, they found the median wait time was 2.0 years in the Vancouver Coastal Health area;
11. The situation is discouraging, disheartening, and distressing as the reality is seniors simply end up on waitlists and if temporary shelters are available, they are placed in inappropriate, unsafe shelters not created to support and assist older people;
12. This is particularly important as seniors' serving organizations have very limited options to provide assistance to this growing epidemic of seniors' homelessness and seniors at high risk of homelessness. Typically, these organization can provide a list of resources, help people apply for SAFER, and assist them with their applications to BC Housing;
13. On July 13, 2024, CBC News released a national story entitled: A 'hopeless' feeling: Struggling seniors face sky-high rents and few, if any, options (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/seniors-rent-canada-1.7257034>) illustrating the terrible impact the housing crisis is having on seniors' across Canada.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that the City of Vancouver take a leadership role in developing and establishing a broad partnership team to create and support a continuum of supportive housing options including seniors'-centred shelters to better address the urgent need to prevent and address the growing level of homelessness impacting older persons.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 5: To recommend strengthened and enhanced accountability and reporting of the City Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy process and requirements from a seniors' lens

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

WHEREAS

1. Seniors' organizations are experiencing a tremendous increase demand for assistance in addressing risk of homelessness and homelessness, there is a growing interest across seniors' serving organizations and seniors organizations in tracking the tremendous rise in demand and have expressed their interest in strengthening and enhancing accountability and reporting of adherence to the City Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy across all neighbourhoods in Vancouver;
2. The Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy – Process and Requirements includes the following provisions:
 - Applicants are required to provide tenant contact information to the City so the City may send and collect the mandatory Needs Assessment through a secure platform. Limited tenant information will be provided back to the applicant so they may create a Tenant Relocation Plan as required by this Policy;

- Applicants are required to sign a Tenant Relocation and Protection Privacy Agreement to ensure the secure and proper use and destruction of private tenant information prior to receiving any information from the mandatory Needs Assessment;
 - Financial compensation based on length of tenancy;
 - Or alternatively, tenants interested in returning to the new building may instead choose to receive a temporary rent top-up when they are in interim housing to mitigate rent increases, they may experience while waiting to exercise their Right of First Refusal;
 - All eligible tenants will be offered the option of assistance from the applicant or their representative with identifying alternate accommodations;
3. Additional support will be required for low-income tenants or tenants with other barriers to housing (as defined in Section 2.1(j)) who request assistance, such as:
- Assistance in securing an affordable housing option, such as a unit in the applicant's portfolio, a unit in non-market social/co-op housing, or a market unit. Applicant will be required to provide proof that an affordable housing option has been secured (e.g., documentation that an affordable housing option has been secured through the applicant's portfolio, other options in the market, non-market housing).
- Note: Affordable is generally defined as 30% or less of household income, unless otherwise agreed to with the tenant.
- Assistance in securing an accessible unit or other appropriate unit type (e.g., supportive housing, assisted living facility) for tenants with other barriers to securing appropriate housing (as per 2.1(j)).
 - If a permanent option cannot be secured immediately, an interim measure may be considered. Interim measures may include providing a rent top-up that bridges the difference between the tenant's current rent, or what they can afford to pay, and the rent in the tenant's new housing until a permanent option is secured. The interim housing option must be suitable for the tenant in the same way as required for the permanent option. Moving expenses must be provided for relocation to permanent housing as well as relocation to and from any interim accommodations.
 - The City will not issue an Occupancy Permit until a permanent housing option has been secured. If the General Manager of Arts Culture and Community Services, having considered the interests of the tenants and the applicant, is satisfied that withholding the Occupancy Permit would be unreasonable, the City may accept alternative options to the provision of a permanent housing option, including the continuation of interim measures based on confirmation a permanent option is to be secured in the near-term.
4. In reviewing various forms there appears to be limited demographic data collected which is troubling given the significant rise in demand for assistance in housing. It

would be helpful for Council and the public including seniors' serving organizations and seniors organizations to receive a summary report of aggregated data across various forms, checklists, and selected choices available to tenants to better assess strengths and weaknesses of the current Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy.

5. It is troubling to OPEAC and Seniors' serving organizations that the current City Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy - Process and Requirements lacks a seniors' lens in terms of market housing and appears to have limited impact on the lived experience of seniors at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct City staff provide a public report on the current utilization and compliance of the City Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy, and seek input from the Seniors' serving community and seniors' organizations to enhance tracking of requests for housing assistance, challenges they are facing and suggestions on improvements to the City Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy Process and Requirements, and request that city staff conduct an end user evaluation before tenant move-out occurs as part of their ongoing monitoring process.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 6: To recommend ensuring community amenities are commensurate with densification of the Broadway Plan to address provincial legislation impacting land use planning in transit-oriented areas

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

WHEREAS

1. The Older Persons and Elderly Advisory Committee is pleased that City Council and city staff are revisiting the Broadway Plan and would like to recommend further opportunities for policy improvements based on early learnings from implementation of the Plan and noted gaps;
2. In May 22, 2022, OPEAC noted that they did not support the Broadway Plan without further modifications. OPEAC recommended the following:
 - A need for a seniors' lens to better understand demographic of older persons and elders living in the impacted neighbourhood, and mechanisms to mitigate the impact of relocation on the seniors' population;
 - Targets and metrics need to be in place to monitor and report back on level of success of enhancing social equity, diversity, and reconciliation in creating complete communities including the needs of seniors;
 - Social amenities need to be embedded in new buildings with planned expanded variances to support NGO offices and community program delivery;
 - We also noted that the Broadway Corridor has some of the most affordable housing for seniors in the City of Vancouver and recommended that Council monitor the rate of demoviction in the Broadway Corridor with particular attention

to seniors' housing as part of the planning and implementation process of the Seniors' Housing Strategy;

- We also suggested that the rate of demoviction needs to be congruent with the capacity of the CoV to partner with all levels of government, religious, ethnic, labour organizations, and other organizations interested in co-investment in non-profit housing suitable for seniors;
3. Recognizing the rising epidemic of first-time homelessness of seniors, noted by the BC Seniors Advocate and in OPEAC recent motions, there is an urgent need to support the continuum of housing needs for seniors living in the Broadway Corridor;
 4. Revisiting the Plan and densification provides an opportunity for Council and City Staff to broaden the range of more innovative building types to create a greater diversity of architectural building structures with graduated heights, to better realize best practices underpinning Great Streets and to create real opportunities to ensure developers and the province meaningfully contribute to the social amenities and seniors housing necessary for population growth and current needs of all residents including seniors;
 5. We are particularly concerned that with all the high-end market housing (unaffordable to most Vancouver residents) being planned for the Broadway Plan that the City of Vancouver has not developed appropriate mechanisms for developers to support community amenities including securing a new site for the South Granville Seniors Centre. We understand that the goal is to pass the revised Broadway Plan by November 2024.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct staff to provide a variety of policy and zoning options within and near the Broadway Corridor to ensure that densification of the Broadway Plan will result in the expansion of social and community amenities, and that City staff involve the Strategic Lead, Older Persons to bring an intersectional senior's lens to the revised proposal.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Sana absent for the vote)

Motion 7: To confirm TAMS planned follow up activities in regard to the June 3rd event, engagement of CBSS community in TAMS activities, and planning fall educational activities

MOVED by Andrea Sara
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee acknowledge that the Transportation, Accessibility and Mobility Committee is planning a follow-up meeting with those who attended the June 3rd event at city hall; It will be seeking interest from those from CBSS sector participants to join TAMS as external working group advisors; there is a plan to schedule a Transportation presentation with Dr. Hansmann in the Fall.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 8: To recommend that the City of Vancouver engage with identified PanCanadian leaders from the 2022 SAC Jurisdictional Scan to discuss and share innovative approaches and successes in dealing with the escalating issues and concerns of older persons' social isolation and loneliness

MOVED by Sana Aziz
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee recommend the City of Vancouver engage with identified Pan-Canadian leaders from the 2022 SAC Jurisdictional Scan to discuss and share innovative approaches and successes in dealing with the escalating issues and concerns of older persons' social isolation and loneliness.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion 9: To recommend OPEAC establish a Community Hub Working Group to explore the feasibility of piloting a model in a Vancouver neighbourhood with key stakeholders and expert advisors

MOVED by Dale Lutes
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee establish a Community Hub Working Group to explore the feasibility of piloting a model in a Vancouver Neighbourhood with key stakeholders and expert advisors.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. New Business

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee establish a Social Isolation and Loneliness Working Group with broad representation from key stakeholders including the City's Strategic Lead for Older Persons, senior-serving agencies, seniors' organizations, Vancouver Coastal Health, and academia. The Working Group will emphasize an intergenerational lens and approach in developing recommendations.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

THAT the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee authorize Marc White to speak to Council in support of the Seniors' Housing Strategy.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Working Session Updates

The Chair provided updates on the working session held on June 21, 2024.

5. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee Leads provided reports and the Committee engaged in discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Friday, September 20, 2024
TIME: 10:00 am
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall
/ Webex Online
The Committee adjourned at 12:05 pm.

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