MINUTES
HOUSING AFFORDABLE STANDING COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2
770 Vernon Avenue
May 27, 2024 at 10:30am

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Scott Dutchak, Mayor Dean Murdock (Chair), Phil
Lancaster, Cam Pringle, Councillor Zac de Vries, Councillor Mena Westhaver

Staff: Pam Hartling, Housing Planning and Policy Manager, Chloe Miller, Planner

MINUTES

**MOVED by Councillor M. Westhaver and Seconded by Councillor Z. de Vries: "That the
Minutes of the Housing Affordability Standing Committee meeting held February 26, 2024,
be adopted as circulated."**

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

Mayor Murdock read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Statement.

RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF NON-MARKET HOUSING

Chloe Miller, Planner, presented a PowerPoint on the Rapid Deployment of Non-Market Housing
bylaw amendments.

The following was noted:

- The purpose of the rapid deployment is to help expedite the development of non-market
housing in Saanich by allowing non-market housing providers to build to the max permitted
under the official community plan without rezoning. Additionally, to delegate development
permits with or without variances to staff.
- Staff drafted regulatory and policy changes for a new schedule to the zoning bylaw that defines
who qualifies for rapid deployment and what they qualify for, particular height and density.
- To qualify you must be located within the urban containment boundary and be in a P, R or C
zone, as well as be either a non-profit rental housing project or a non-market rental housing
project. Additional qualifications being subject to a legal agreement securing affordability and
rental tenure and projects may include a mixed-use component provided that at least 50% of
the site is in residential use.
- Eligible projects qualify for maximum height allowed in the OCP based on the future land use
designation of the site and densities that correspond to height maximums, apartment-style
building forms and proposing special provisions for setbacks etc.
- Other policy changes to support rapid deployment are removal of parking requirements and
adding flexibility to bonding requirements.

  The following was noted during the discussion and in response to questions from the
  committee:

- It was suggested to add more flexibility to bonding requirements and amending the bylaw to add wording that bonding will be required as a by discretion of the manager.
- Applications come with a comprehensive letter or report with project proposal. Operators still have to meet all servicing requirements. Specific projects for assembly of parcels should still have all the project details.
- We transition heights and centers as we get out to neighborhood areas. The highest buildings are in the core and transition lower towards outside. Generally, we should be consistent with the provincial guidelines and adopting provincial definition. Transition points are important, recommended go to centers edge.
- We want to make sure that we are limiting 100% residential. We want to provide opportunities for ground floor commercial (daycare etc.) and try to have accessory use for residential developments.
- No parking requirements will cause more street parking. A parking analysis is an option for parking requirements, but the developer is to provide appropriate transit requirements. Still the District is not saying no parking is required, just providing more flexibility for operators while allowing operators to provide more affordable housing. If it is a problem, staff will do a review and amend the bylaw.

MOVED by Councillor Z. de Vries and Seconded by P. Lancaster: "That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee recommends that Council approve the Rapid Deployment of Non-Market Housing Policy."

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED
with S. Dutchak OPPOSED**

MOVED by Councillor Z. de Vries and Seconded by P. Lancaster: "That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee recommends that that Council support the maximum density for eligible non-market and non-profit developments anywhere within the boundaries for Centres in the OCP and not apply the transition radius as recommended by staff when establishing maximum OCP density for Rapid Deployment of Non-Market Housing."

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED
with Councillors Brownoff and Westhaver OPPOSED**

SAANICH AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESERVE FUND

Pam Hartling, Housing Planning and Policy Manager, presented a PowerPoint on the Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund.

The following was noted:

- The purpose is to incent the development of new non-market rental housing supply.
- Components including:
  - fast-tracking housing developments from non-profit housing providers
  - community amenity contribution exemptions
  - development cost charges waivers
  - permissive tax exemptions
  - donated land

- • pre-zoning
- As of 2024, approximately 1,800,000 is reserved to support affordable housing projects, but currently there is no separate Reserve Fund.
- To support the retention and improvement of existing non-market housing supply. Additionally, to support pre-development, capital, and construction costs related to non-market housing development.
- Projects may include a variety of rent levels (deeply subsidized, rent geared to income, below- or near-market, and market rental rates).
- Eligible projects must be operated by a non-profit housing provider, must be primarily residential and must be a rental tenure.
- Eligible costs include new construction costs, renewal, and repair/renovation costs to retain existing rental stock.
- Capital and construction costs support transparency and provide predictability and consistency to applicants. In addition, decouple from CAC's to support other fund sources, dependent on health of the fund, recognize costs of providing larger units, and amounts to be reviewed and updated over time.

The following was noted during the discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- An option to be considered is construction loans. The biggest impact is creating more unit in which the funding is per unit, not per project.
- Not a huge risk in adding affordable ownership, although there are co-ops. Using the funds for reno and repair costs in which the province has set up a 500,000,000 fund to direct people to that fund. It is best not to overlap with other funds.
- The current language gives flexibility and has a sustainable model. Creating space for alternate uses such as facility uses.
- Language is important, this is not an affordable housing fund, this is an affordable rental housing fund to differ from affordable ownership.
- Focus on the highest need and where the core housing need is greatest.

MOVED by Councillor Z. de Vries and Seconded by Councillor M. Westhaver: "That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee recommend that Council approve the Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund Policy."

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED
with S. Dutchak OPPOSED**

CO-OP HOUSING

Pam Hartling, Housing Planning and Policy Manager, gave a verbal update on Co-op Housing.

- The Federal Government has indicated they are bringing back the Co-op Funding Program.
- No update has been received from co-op housing and we have been advised to see what happens when the federal program is completed and how to uptake it. Advise that we wait and see until that program is activated.
- The District has made an extensive effort to include co-op housing which is represented in new OCP.
- One challenge is moderate/middle income and higher income people have become disinterested in those models. Small scale multi-unit has high potential for this and is recommended to create partnerships between these individuals.

- The Minister previously mentioned these structures were not being maintained and that a lot of them in the region would have to be destructed and rebuilt.

MOVED by Councillor Z. de Vries and Seconded by Councillor J. Brownoff: "That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee receive this update for information."

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be determined at a later date.

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Mayor Dean Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

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Sydney Murphy, Committee Clerk