

Seniors Advisory Committee

March 5, 2010

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Seniors Advisory Committee was held on Friday, March 5, 2010 at 9:30 AM in Committee room # 2 at City Hall.
The notes were taken by Colleen McGuinness, Committee member.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Morrissey – Chair
Dena Dawson – Vice Chair
Grace Balbutin
Thomas Brunker
Alice Choi
Dellie Lidyard
Colleen McGuinness
Eva Wadolna

Others attending:

Melinda Shultz – observer
Jill Weiss – Liaison – Persons with Disabilities Advisory
Committee (PWDC)

ABSENT: Sylvia Gurstein and Henry Lee,
Approved LOA: Virginia McDade, Patrick Simpson

It was agreed that the Committee would continue to meet monthly but noted that the City will only provide staff, four times during the year.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of January 15th meeting were approved.
Moved by Tom Brunker, seconded by Dellie Lidyard - carried

CORRESPONDENCE FOLDER – moved to the end of agenda

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Housing Sub-Committee Report by Chair Eva Wadolna
Eva reported that the Housing Sub-committee has held two meetings. They agreed that safe, accessible and appropriate housing for seniors should be a priority for the Sub-committee. Discussion indicated that 30% STIR ratio might not work for all low-income seniors. The Sub-committee decided to explore other ways of establishing more appropriate Shelter-cost-To-Income-Ratio for that group.

The Housing Sub-committee also dealt with the SAFER and Universal Design provisions considered for integration into City Building by-laws; Jill Weiss working on that project reported as follows.

Jill Weiss reported on information from the Persons With Disabilities Committee (PWDC). The City is planning an amendment to the Building By-law that will incorporate SAFER and Universal Design features. Jill is hopeful that these proposed amendments will be approved and it is expected that staff will meet with the SAC and PWDC once the documents are ready for review. The PWDC is assisting by researching the cost of installation of these features during the construction phase, the cost of not doing it and retro-fitting later and the social cost of not providing these features and the resulting injury or necessary relocation. They will also be looking to find best-practices as part of the research. They hope to get the research complete before the end of March.

Another item the Housing Sub-committee dealt with is need for a definition of what constitutes “senior friendly housing project” intended to assist City Council and staff in assessment of projects claiming to provide senior appropriate housing. The issue stems from a project currently under consideration on 41 Ave and Balaclava; Colleen McGuinness report on particulars of the project follows.

Colleen McGuinness reported on the Balaclava and 41st development. The property is currently for sale. The new zoning by-law is currently being drafted by a member of the Planning Department staff. It was noted that a definition for “Senior Housing” is necessary to ensure that rezoning applications and developments can’t use this phrase to get concessions and then don’t deliver them.

Eva shared info re the Temporary Housing Program funded by the United Way of Greater Vancouver for homeless seniors. Henry Lee agreed to obtain info re the number of seniors on the BC Housing wait list who live in Vancouver.

Eva also reported that the Housing Sub-committee’s discussed various types of independent living housing arrangements: co-op housing, co-housing, Abbeyfield housing and Life – lease type of arrangement. Since the Life – lease concept is not well known it was agreed to invite Jane Hyman to present the concept using as an example the Performing Arts Lodge project at Coal Harbour.

The Housing Sub-committee also tackled the issue of Emergency Planning from seniors’ perspective and it intends to approach City staff to review the emergency plans for seniors and disabled individuals to ensure that the safety of these populations is well served by the plans that are in place.

Eva presented to the SAC Work Plan of the Housing Sub-Committee it contains the following tasks:

- * Incorporation of SAFER and Universal Design into City Bylaws
- * Promotion of Age Friendly City, a W.H.O program for Vancouver
- * Review of the City Emergency Planning for Seniors
- * Redefining concept of housing affordability for seniors
- * Development of definition of “senior friendly project”
- * Ongoing review of relevant city projects impacting seniors

2. Transportation Committee Report

Tom Brunker reported that the committee has not met but he agreed to initiate a meeting.

Dena Dawson informed SAC members that she is withdrawing from the Housing Subcommittee and joining the Transportation Subcommittee

3. Discussion of Working Group on Beacon Hill Virtual Village

Colleen McGuinness reported that the group had not met. She agreed to get the committee members researching what services are currently offered in other parts of the country.

It was also noted by Eva Wadolna that Neighbourhood Houses are moving towards providing services similar to those offered by the Beacon Hill concept.

4. Issues Arising from Balaclava & 41st Project (See housing subcommittee report above.)

5. Update on Pedestrian Project

In the absence of Patrick Simpson there was no report.

6. Update on PWD Sub-Committee on Community Gardens

Tom Brunker was the committee representative to link with the PWD joint committee. Jill reported that due to a lack of volunteer hours it is not feasible to pursue accessible community gardens at this time. She noted that there are no official guidelines about community gardens therefore guidelines specifying accessibility implementations are needed.

Moved by the Seniors Advisory Committee:

“That the City of Vancouver be responsible for installing accessible pathways in all new community gardens.”

Moved by Dellie Lidyard, seconded by Tom Brunker
Carried unanimously

As Councillor David Cadman chairs the relevant committee Chris and Tom will join Jill to meet with him and officially put this statement forward.

7. Discussion re. protocols for sending letters, email, using SAC membership
The matter of how individual committee members communicate with members of City Council and staff was discussed.

The Committee agreed that:

1. Any formal communication from the committee is to be communicated through the Chair.
2. It is necessary for SAC members to clarify in the text of their personal communications with Council, staff and outside organizations that they are speaking as an individual although they are a member of SAC.
3. In order to use the designation "committee member" in the signature, members need to circulate the text of the communication to all committee members seeking a quorum support within a set time or if under time constrain get the chair of SAC to authorize.

8. Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

Previously Human Rights Coalition executive director Susan O'Donnell and UBC Vice president Tom Patch were discussed as speakers to address the issue of rights for seniors. Subsequently, Tom Patch passed along the information that people over the age of 65 had their rights protected in the same legislation as all others. This issue has been addressed.

9. Other Business

- a. Correspondence from the West End Seniors Advocacy Group was discussed and Eva Wadolna volunteered to contact the group to learn how SAC can help seniors affected by potential evictions.
- b. SFU Seniors Program is presenting new DVD on "Aging Friendly Cities" on Thursday, March 18th 10:00 am to noon at Harbour Centre, Fletcher Auditorium; it is free - all welcome.
- c. Colleen McGuinness informed SAC members that Dunbar housing Trust will be hosting a community meeting on senior's housing on Wednesday, April 27th. Location and time to be confirmed.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 11:30 AM

Next meeting

Date: April 16, 2010

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Committee Room #2, Third Floor, City Hall