

## Affordable Housing Task Force December 15, 2020 – 1:00 PM

The Affordable Housing Task Force met on the above date through electronic means with the following members in attendance:

Present: Warden Selwyn Hicks; Councillors Dwight Burley, Paul McQueen, Alar Soever, Shirley Keaveney and Brian O’Leary

### Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing; Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture; Scott Taylor, Senior Planner; Heather Morrison, Clerk; Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator and Rob Hatten, Communications Manager

## Call to Order

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

## Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations made.

## Election of Chair

Warden Hicks noted that he is resigning as Chair since being elected Warden.

Heather Morrison called for nominations for Chair of the Affordable Housing Task Force.

AH01-21 Moved by: Warden Hicks                      Seconded by: Councillor Burley

**That Councillor McQueen be nominated as Chair of the Affordable Housing Task Force for the duration of the Task Force.**

Councillor Burley moved nominations close.

Councillor McQueen accepted the nomination and was acclaimed Chair.

## Reports

### HDR-AF-01-21 Affordable Housing Development

Anne Marie Shaw presented the above noted report. She provided an overview of affordable housing in Ontario, noting that Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada where municipal levels of government are responsible for housing.

She outlined the pressures on Ontario's Housing System, including increasing costs, affordability and lack of stable funding.

She spoke to efforts to modernize the housing system. More action is needed to stimulate construction of new rentals, funding should be predictable and service managers must be recognized as equal partners. Further, housing affordability must be funded as a shared priority and responsibility.

Ms. Shaw provided an overview of the Grey County waitlist, noting that there are 556 Grey County residents needing affordable or rent geared to income housing.

She elaborated on the efforts and projects of the Housing Department recently and spoke to the opportunities for creating more affordable housing. Some include use of rent supplements, co investing with nonprofit housing providers, divesting of some properties, developing land banks and renovating other County owned properties.

She then provided options for raising investment capital and providing incentives. An affordable housing development fund would be helpful to provide funds to build affordable housing, purchase surplus land and offer rent supplements.

She outlined current affordable housing initiatives, funding requirements and opportunities.

Staff addressed questions from the Task Force regarding various approaches on how to get people involved in building affordable housing and the possibility of locating affordable housing in rural areas.

There was a suggestion from the Task Force to increase the tax levy by 1% for 2021 and solely dedicate these funds to affordable housing. It is a major issue in the County and there is a need to address it.

Mr. Weppler confirmed 1% of the proposed budget is approximately \$610,000.

The Task Force discussed plans on how to move forward after 2021. Mr. Weppler noted that there is currently \$500,000 proposed for Affordable Housing in the 2021 budget. If Council endorses the proposed motion and increases the budget by 1% for affordable

housing in 2021, there will be just over 1 million dollars being put forward for 2021. If council wishes to continue dedicating 1% of the budget towards Affordable Housing in coming years, similar to the fund that was established for health care capital, only the 1% of 2022's budget will be dedicated to Affordable Housing, unless directed otherwise.

*Main Motion*

Moved by: Councillor Burley                      Seconded by: Councillor O'Leary

**That Report HDR-AF-01-21 regarding affordable housing development be received;**

**That the recommended action plan goals and timelines be supported;**

**That an affordable housing development fund be created; and**

**That the fund be used to fund affordable housing builds, buy surplus lands or properties and provide rent supplements.**

*Amendment*

AF02-21      Moved by: Councillor O'Leary                      Seconded by: Councillor Burley

**That the motion be amended to state that:**

**That the Affordable Housing Task Force recommends the tax levy be increased by 1% in 2021 and that this increase be dedicated solely to affordable housing; and**

**That commencing in 2021 and each year thereafter, Grey County establishes a 1% levy to be dedicated specifically to Affordable Housing.**

Carried

*Main Motion as Amended*

AF03-21      Moved by: Councillor Burley                      Seconded by: Councillor O'Leary

**That Report HDR-AF-01-21 regarding affordable housing development be received;**

**That the recommended action plan goals and timeline be supported; and**

**That an affordable housing development fund be created; and**

**That the fund be used to fund affordable housing builds, buy surplus lands or properties and provide rent supplements; and**

**That the Affordable Housing Task Force recommends the tax levy be increased by 1% in 2021 and that this increase be dedicated solely to affordable housing; and**

**That commencing in 2021 and each year thereafter, Grey County establishes a 1% levy to be dedicated specifically to Affordable Housing.**

Carried

## Other Business

### *Living on Main Street*

Scott Taylor addressed the Committee on the draft Living on Main Street student report. The goal of the report was to look at the downtowns across Grey County and to look at the shape of the main streets in the downtowns and examine further opportunities for housing. The report has been done in partnership with University of Toronto students.

Mr. Taylor noted that downtowns need to contain a mix of both commercial and residential spaces. There is still a desire to maintain the commercial basis of the County's downtowns but still provide opportunity for residential space as well.

Recommendations from the Living on Main Street report included that Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) should be living documents and staff need to consider formal reviews of the documents. It was further recommended that staff conduct impact analysis on the documents and that municipalities work with organizations such as the Business Improvement Areas and Business Enterprise Centres to actively promote the CIPs.

It was also noted that municipalities could offer wraparound supports and offer small loans to cover some types of projects. CIPs should include funding for attainable housing as well.

Considerations could be given to promoting dormitory style housing to house the labour force and to look at parking standards in zoning bylaws as well.

Staff will be bringing forward a report in 2021 to Committee of the Whole.

## *Housing and Homelessness Services in Ontario – Policy Brief*

Anne Marie Shaw noted that she wanted to inform the Committee of some of the pressures on service managers and the consultations that are happening to modernize housing.

Councillor O’Leary noted that he brought forward a motion to Owen Sound City Council, to dedicate a City owned property on 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the County for affordable or attainable housing. Randy Scherzer noted that staff have looked at the property as a potential surplus land site. There is a reservoir on the property which would have to be removed as part of any future development and current zoning only allows for townhouses, single family dwellings and semi-detached buildings. Anything outside of this would require planning approvals. It is an opportunity to add it to the land bank as a potential private development opportunity through a Community Improvement Plan program.

Councillor Soever noted that the Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation is entering into the planning process for its build. Approximately 70 people have applied to the wait list. One of the requirements to apply is that an individual must work 30 hours per week in the Town of the Blue Mountains. The housing is marketed towards families with an income of between \$30,000 - \$100,000 per year.

## **Next Meeting Dates**

February 2021

On motion by Warden Hicks and Councillor Burley, the meeting adjourned at 3:51 PM.

Paul McQueen, Chair