



Affordable Housing

January 20th 2010

Present: David Reay, Deneanne Quamme, Cecilia Hudec, Sue Noga, Sina Smith, Roz Johns, Isabel Evans, Brad Smith, Brenda Plant

Guests: Susan Rechel, Bonnie Olsen, David Donn, Wendy Meloche, Nicloe Leduc, Harry Carrigan, Maoz Bouskila, David Richardson, Zachery Helmberger, Dave MacDonald, Barry Karich

GROUP OVERVIEWS

Study Circles

- Wendy gave an overview of the groups work. They have met several time and decided to focus on the need for a daytime shelter. Their current priority is to find a location

Faith Housing Group

- This group recently did the Homeless Connect

St. Albans Extreme Weather

- The shelter is only open for extreme weather and they are looking into ways of staying open all winter. They are also looking for another physical location

STAND

- The STANDS were based on mothers looking for their children who had disappeared in Argentina. The Richmond group met once a week on a Saturday afternoon for a year and a half holding their "Homes For All" banners

RCSAC (Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee)

- This is an advisory council to the City of Richmond. They have formed working groups who plan to hold a forum and prepare a presentation for City. They would also like the City to develop a website for people looking for housing in Richmond.

Affordable Housing Task Force

- This group was formed in 2002 when none of the other housing groups existed. It has been actively lobbying all levels of governments for increased affordable housing in our community.

As all of these groups are working towards improving housing in Richmond it was thought we should work together.

Affordable Housing Coordinator

- Joan D'Angola has resigned. There have been concerns about the job description for this position and it was thought that some recommendations should go forward to council. If anyone has any ideas, please forward them to Brenda. Collectively we have been effective in the past to have a voice in the City. Suggestion: that we chat with Joan and ask what worked/didn't work with her mandate

Discussion re: public event

- Caution: the public can be on board by having media releases & media at the event – suggestion that this be an action forum resulting in a community action strategy ie fact sheets that get printed in local papers.
- Opening to the public will dilute a lot of the work that could happen
- We could have a tiered event that has different groups for different levels of involvement that includes professionals who can give answers.

Goals for having a housing conference

- Create awareness for Richmond residents: the history (stopping of transfer payments) – what used to be and what the current situation is.
- Information about the Faith Housing conference is readily available. They had 5 goals and 5 people chaired.
- One goal is to have a housing Society in Richmond with a charitable number so we can solicit solid donations of property
- To have a Shelter / Drop-in Centre as one facility
- To respond to the need for advocates for people using shelters
- To draw together service providers to develop strategies and/or formulate action plans
- To identify leaders for the action plan and/or how we can work in a unified fashion

Discussion re: forming a Housing Society

- A housing society would be a resource – one number to call – if someone has issues
- Concern with forming a society is that gov't likes to see established organizations for funding. Partnerships would be more viable ie CMHA
- It's a continuum issue – solutions are needed on different levels
- Need to clarify each level in the continuum. Some levels are the responsibility of Health but still needs the City's support.
- Suggestion: That a coalition (or society) that focus on this continuum. Action plan based on greatest need. Groups at the table will focus more on their area of interest. We would then be speaking with one unified voice.

- Q. Will money be involved? A. Suggestion: that the City holds off on hiring a coordinator until we have developed our strategy as the new coordinator may be very involved in what our coalition does
- Could review the 3 areas that the City identified: deep subsidies, low rent market and entry level purchase
- Turning Point – BC Housing has no funding for them
- In the past 4 years – no affordable housing has been built in Richmond

Format discussion

- Having a guest speaker may attract people.
- Locals who can give their stories can be powerful
- A combination may be effective
- Suggestion: A speaker from each level of the continuum
- Friday / Saturday event
- Fri – Continuum work
- Fri – night speaker
- Could run just one day (Saturday)
- Need to show both the good (what's working) and the gaps
- Regional plan on homelessness – 3 steps
- A “draw” – looking at the continuum

Workshops

- Seth Klein is coming to speak and would be a good draw.
- Suggestion: that bringing in a high profile person is more of a draw for the public
- Suggestions: Charlotte Diamond, Ryan Styles

Logistics

- Mid-April to early May
- Evening event followed by full work day
- Location – Gilmore Park
- Ralph Fisher Auditorium would be a great location for an evening event. There are break away rooms in the hospital on the other side of the rotunda (near the Gateway)
- There may be an issue for some people if the forum is hold in a church
- Needs to be a central location and free (or very cheap)
- We may be able to get a school
- ACTION: Susan will check with Belinda Boyd
- A sign-up sheet for sub-committees was circulated