

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee: December 9, 2020

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR J. FARR.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR C. COLLINS.....

Stimulating Local Development - Affordable Housing Projects - Cash-in-lieu Parking Policy – Downtown Secondary Plan Area -Temporary Period

WHEREAS the Report of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery includes a number of recommendations related to supporting economic recovery by stimulating local development, and particularly construction of new affordable housing;

Parking Requirements

WHEREAS, the City previously used a temporary reduction in parking requirements to stimulate downtown development, through a Temporary Use By-law for the period November 1, 1996 to September 1, 1999;

WHEREAS, Section 40(1) and 40(2) of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities to enter into an agreement with an owner or occupant of a building that effectively allows for the payment of cash-in-lieu of any parking requirement and the City of Hamilton has such a policy in place in its Official Plan that authorizes the City to consider a cash-in-lieu payment for all or part of the parking required under the applicable in-force Zoning By-law requirements;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton Official Plan directs that cash-in-lieu of parking payments are to be used for the acquisition of lands and/or the provision of off-street parking as deemed appropriate by the City;

WHEREAS, the former City of Hamilton has operational guidelines in place on how cash-in-lieu of parking payments are to be calculated which currently state that “payments made by proponents will not be less than 50% of the total cost of the parking not provided” and set out a formula for calculating the cost of parking based on both land and construction costs;

WHEREAS, the most recent use of the cash-in-lieu of parking policy was in 2017 for 8 parking spaces for a project in downtown Hamilton and which resulted in the payment of \$140,400 (approximately \$17,550 per parking space);

WHEREAS, a temporary amendment to the cash-in-lieu of parking policy to reduce the cash-in-lieu rate could be used to reduce the overall cost of development;

Building Permit Fees for Affordable Housing

WHEREAS, since 2018 the City of Hamilton has waived various application fees for planning approvals (e.g. zoning, minor variances, site plan applications) for affordable housing projects, which has resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in savings for new affordable housing projects, but has not waived Building Permit fees which, for recent affordable housing projects, have cost affordable housing developers thousands of dollars per project, such as the Parkdale Landing (\$46k), North End Landing (\$118k); Ken Soble Tower (\$129k); and, Good Shephard (\$56k);

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton currently maintains a Building Permit Revenue Stabilization Reserve, which is forecast to have a balance of approximately \$22 million as of December 2020, but the use of these funds is regulated provincially under the *Ontario Building Code Act*, which limits their use to the administration of the Building Code Act;

WHEREAS, if the Province were to allow it, the City could use a small portion of its Building Permit Revenue Stabilization Reserve funds to offset the cost of waiving Building Permit fees for affordable housing;

Surety Bonds

WHEREAS, the Report of the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery specifically recommends that the City of Hamilton permit surety bonds as a means of securing various financial obligations to the City on the part of developers;

WHEREAS, surety bonds can potentially reduce the cost of development by providing developers with a lower-cost option for financial securities, compared to current City practice which largely require Letters of Credit; and,

WHEREAS, there are potential risks to the City with respect to surety bonds, for example, related to the ease of accessing to the funds should the City have to draw upon them;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

- (a) That Planning staff be directed to report back to Planning Committee with options for modifying the City's existing cash-in-lieu of parking policy to provide for a temporary, reduced cash-in-lieu of parking fee within the Downtown Secondary Plan Area for a temporary period;
- (b) That the Mayor be authorized and directed to write to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the local MPPs to request that the

Province amend the *Ontario Building Code Act* to permit municipalities to utilize Building Permit Reserve funds to offset the cost of waiving Building Permit fees for affordable housing projects;

- (c) That, if the amendments are made to the *Ontario Building Code Act* to permit municipalities to utilize Building Permit Reserve funds to offset the cost of waiving Building Permit fees for affordable housing projects, staff be directed to report back to the Planning Committee on a recommended program for waiving Building Permit fees for affordable housing projects, to be funded by the Building Permit Revenue Stabilization Reserve (Reserve Number 104050); and,
- (d) That Finance and Legal staff be directed to report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on the potential for the use of surety bonds as financial security for development projects to secure municipal agreements.