

ACPD's Housing Working Group Meeting Notes

July 16th, 2024

Virtual Teams Meeting

10:00AM – 12:00PM

Members in Attendance: James Kemp, Lance Dingman

Also in Attendance: Amanda Warren-Ritchie, Adrian MacKenzie

Members Absent: Paula Kilburn, Benjamin Cullimore, Hargun Kaur, Robert Westbrook

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of July 16th Agenda

3. CityHousing Accessibility Recommendations

Discussion with Amanda Warren-Ritchie: We began our discussion with Amanda introducing Adrian MacKenzie, the EDI specialist CityHousing hired in February. We then reviewed the report attached to this document regarding CityHousing's response to our recommendations presented to the CHH board in November.

While our recommendation that CityHousing create an accessibility department came forward at roughly the same time that CityHousing was planning to hire someone, it served to emphasize the need for specifically trained staff. Adrian is attending all tenants meetings and is learning what is required. Our next recommendation regarding a site survey of all properties and reviewing accessibility was also accepted. CityHousing staff will add accessibility issues to its annual inspections list and properties will be assessed for their common spaces in order to best utilize CMHC funding. CityHousing has committed to twenty percent of units achieving accessibility. This led to a broader discussion of what baseline accessibility means.

We then discussed the procedures involved in asking for modifications at home. Amanda listed the ways to have your unit modified. Chair asked if there was a place online where an individual could research the process without asking the property manager first. Amanda responded that there isn't but that Adrian can create an information page on CHH's duty to accommodate. Amanda and Adrian then intimated that CHH is looking to possibly break away from the hamilton.ca website and this would give them more

flexibility. Chair asked for a third party method to ask for accommodations and Adrian suggested that once/if they do have their own site they can create a web portal to apply for accommodations, thereby creating a neutral method of applying.

Chair then suggested that we assist CHH when/if they ever do decide to create their own web service as automated testing is inadequate to ensure accessibility.

Our next recommendation is to create a dedicated complaints line and here CHH has decided to keep things the way they are for now. Complaints can go through the AODA complaints line or through the property manager or tenant support workers. CHH is working on a complaints line but it is at least a year away from being completed. This too will be available on the separate site if/when they create it. Chair raised concerns that the AODA line is too heavily relied on by all departments of the City and it only has a small staff. Also of concern is that complaints don't seem to be addressed through the property managers as well and gave an example of that. Amanda responded that tenants often don't understand the process in addressing complaints and the time it can take to address them.

We then discussed universal design and the difficulties in having units averaging 56 years old. CHH will adopt universal accessible Design in all new properties in accordance with the OBC and the City's own BFDG.

We discussed maintenance plans and contractors AODA training and accessibility plans. CHH is undergoing a thorough retraining of its staff regarding accessibility and that is one of Adrian's priorities over the next year. They will also develop training modules for contractors to ensure they are meeting accessibility standards. This also includes things like snow removal.

We recommended that CHH participate in Public Health's Extreme Heat Working Group and they have done so since Q3 2023.

We also recommended that CHH meet with the HWG on a biannual basis and they have agreed this is a prudent course of action that allows us to bring up concerns and allows CHH to ask questions or receive clarification.

Amanda finished the presentation by thanking the ACPD's HWG for their work in reviewing the AODA and how it affects housing; as well as for our thoughtful and reasonable recommendations to make CHH a more accessible place to live for everyone.

4. Other Business: There was no other business

5. Adjournment