

ACPD's Housing Working Group Meeting Notes

August 20th, 2024

Virtual Teams Meeting

10:00AM – 12:00PM

Members in Attendance: James Kemp, Lance Dingman, Paula Kilburn

Also in Attendance: Sam Hanna, Temo Cruz, Colby Woodall

Members Absent: Benjamin Cullimore, Hargun Kaur, Robert Westbrook

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of August 20th Agenda: Agenda was approved

3. Approval of July 16th Meeting Notes: Meeting Notes were approved.

4. Discussion with Temo Cruz (Office of the Housing Secretariat), Sam Hanna (Social Policy Analyst, Housing Services), and Colby Woodall (Office of

the Housing Secretariat) regarding Universal Accessible Design: Sam began the discussion by giving everyone a background overview of the accessible housing motion the ACPD put forward in 2020 and the work done by his office thus far. While the City of Hamilton has embraced the concept of Universal Accessible Design, it is not required inside residential units and this is something this motion was trying to address.

The problem is that by-law cannot supercede the Ontario Building Code. However, the City can choose to exceed Provincial regulations through its Barrier Free Design Guidelines (BFDG); the problem being that the current BFDG is not required inside residences. Sam asked the Office of the Housing Secretariat (OHS) to attend a meeting with us to discuss the options available to improve accessibility. Temo gave us an overview of the Housing Secretariat and how they function. They identified for us that there is only one question on the developer's application with regards to accessibility and AODA compliance. Temo explained that when they are evaluating affordable or supportive housing, the applicant can choose whether they are seeking Universal accessibility or the lower barrier free design. Applicants get graded higher on their CMHC funding

stream if they are achieving or exceeding 20% accessible units.

Chair asked Temo to explain what standard the OHS is using to determine if they have achieved 20%; grab bars in the bathroom? Rocker switches and levered door handles? Temo showed us the CMHC's guidelines for accessible housing funding. The HWG has been asking several different groups for years to explain what they are using as a metric and this is the first actual answer we have gotten. Temo promised to send us the link to the standards and we will review at the next HWG meeting.

We then discussed the evaluation of completed projects and how lived experience is crucial here. While things may seem accessible on paper, there are many flaws that don't appear until you try to use them as designed. Chair gave some examples of properties reviewed by ACPD and the design flaws that are considered accessible.

We then discussed the design of common spaces and used laundry rooms as an example of no one size fits all solution. We explained how each building is going to have to assess its population needs on an individual basis to achieve universal accessibility. Another prime example of the value of lived experience.

Chair explained the work we did with CityHousing over recent years and the recommendations put forward that they have accepted and are implementing now. They are embracing universal design and have hired an IDEA specialist to review each building to maximize the value of their CMHC Accessibility funding. We pointed out that this is only one housing provider even though it is the biggest. Temo suggested that we connect with Hamilton is Home, a group comprised of Hamilton's Social Housing Providers and has offered to connect us for further discussions.

The OHS has suggested they may change their metric to incorporate more of universal design. We thanked them for their time to explain how their office and funding streams work.

5. Canadian Disability Benefit Forum on September 11th: Chair explained that the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction reached out and asked him to be a co-chair on a public forum regarding the CDB. The Forum is a joint venture with the RFPR, the SPRC, The HCLC, ACORN and the ACPD. The Federal government has asked for final consultations on the regulations of the CDB due on September 23rd. This forum is in response to that so we can get our recommendations in before the deadline based on the

community's feedback. It will be part information session, part Q&A and will be concluded by brief statements from local MPs. There will be an Op-Ed prior to the event in the Spectator. *This forum has been moved to the 16th at the David Braley Centre in order to accommodate the MPs as they were attending a caucus the week prior.

6. Housing Guide Review Prep: We just reviewed the housing guide shortly and discussed what needs to be done in the coming months. Paula suggested a complete rewrite, but there are good sections in the guide that the Chair wants to harvest first. The removed material can still be used by staff to learn about disabilities, but is not relevant to those with disabilities.

7. Other Business: There was no other business.

8. Adjournment