



The Corporation of the Town of Essex

Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2024, 4:00 pm

Location: Essex Municipal Building, 33 Talbot Street South

Present: Lynda Leopold - Chair
Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair
William Baker
Chris Carpenter
Frasier Fathers
Rodney Hammond, Councillor Ward 4
Kim Verbeek, Councillor Ward 2
Sherry Bondy, Mayor

Absent: Fiona Coughlin
Fred Groves
Dorene Lester
Amanda Morgan

Also Present: Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services
Marsha Buchta, Recording Secretary

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request. Please contact the Clerk's Office at clerks@essex.ca or 519-776-7336 extension 1100 or 1101.

1. Call to Order

The Chair, Lynda Leopold, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Mayor Bondy left the meeting at 5:37 pm.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples), and of the Huron-Wendat Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest noted.

4. Adoption of Published Agenda

4.1 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Agenda for November 6, 2024

AHTS24-11-05

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair

Seconded By William Baker

That the published agenda for the November 6 , 2024 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Affordable Housing Task Force Minutes for September 10, 2024

AHTF24-11-06

Moved By Frasier Fathers

Seconded By Kim Verbeek, Councillor Ward 2

That the minutes of the Affordable Housing Task Force meeting held September 10, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Presentations

6.1 Update on New Official Plan Project

Ms. Chadwick provided an update on the Official Plan project. Upon feedback received from residents, Council, the Town's Consultant WSP and the County Planner, Council directed administration to proceed with additional tasks under the drafting of the new Official Plan. A local comprehensive review, servicing study review, and financial plan review will be completed to assess future growth in settlement areas. Budget for the additional tasks will be identified in the 2025 Draft Budget for Council's decision-making.

6.2 Update on Windsor-Essex Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

The consultant on the Windsor-Essex Regional Affordable Housing Strategy met with Ms. Chadwick. The discussions focused on sites that are considered 'quick wins' for affordable housing projects. The Harrow High School and Essex non-profit lands along Fairview were identified as ideal properties. Essex Non-profit have applied for funding as they would like to build 2 or 3 storey affordable housing units, and Administration is in the midst of finalizing the Harrow High School Redevelopment RFP to include a requirement for affordable housing units. The consultants have also shared they will be providing affordable housing targets for the County of Essex which the lower tier municipalities can extrapolate to determine the affordable housing unit targets that needs to be provided locally, in each municipality, over the next 25 years.

6.3 Update on the Harrow High School RFP

Ms. Chadwick provided an update of the Harrow High School Request for Proposal ("RFP"). Administration is currently finalizing the terms of reference, which stipulates a high-density residential requirement and Council has approved the proposal's target of 20% for affordable housing. The PPS (Provincial Planning Statement) has provided a 20% target for all municipalities to build affordable housing.

The RFP will be posted by end of the year with evaluations to follow prior to seeking Council's decision.

Chair Lynda Leopold would like administration to examine the possibility of the Affordable Housing Task Force's involvement in developments respecting affordable housing. The ability to comment on projects or be informed may help in the development of Task Force strategies. Ms. Chadwick will consult with the CAO and advise.

7. New Discussions

7.1 Maintaining Affordable Housing Units / Preventing Conversion

The Draft Official Plan includes new policies, in line with the County Official Plan policies, that will protect affordable housing from demolition and conversion to market rate housing. This will allow the Municipality to enact by-laws; however, resources will be required to monitor and enforce. Options include licensing programs where there may be an incentive tied to it, CIP (Community Improvement Plan) for affordable housing grants or loans, and affordable housing reserve strategies.

Mr. Chris Carpenter advised the best way to ensure housing remains affordable is for the Town to own the land, or provide free of charge, and partner with a non-profit housing Corporation so they can't generate a profit.

Questions were raised regarding the amount of affordable stock in Essex and protecting the starter home stock / rental home stock through various by-law enactment or zoning provisions.

Mr. Richard Kokovai commented that as a municipality it is difficult to enact bylaws that give you authority, unless you can site a specific section of an Act within provincial or federal legislation.

The Task Force will investigate more options to prevent conversion and mechanisms to maintain affordable housing and present them on the next agenda.

7.2 Supporting Developers with shovels in the ground to Build homes (Affordable or otherwise) (i.e Surety Bonds vs. Cash / Letter of Credit)

Ms. Chadwick indicated that Council directed Administration to review various sections of the Development Services Manual, including the use of surety bonds. It has been suggested by various developers that securities in the form of lines of credit may tie up the developer's money and prevent them from building more housing. Mr. Richard Kokovai suggested the Town may be able to enter into an agreement with a specific bank or surety company that the Developer would then be directed to utilize.

Mr. Bill Baker provided some documentation and articles on supporting developers. Documentation to be reviewed and discussed on the next Agenda. He suggested that executive summaries of research be provided to more effectively utilize time.

Incentivizing developers to build affordable and supporting non-profits to build affordable have unique barriers requiring further investigation and research.

Members of the Task Force should review other Municipal Affordable Housing strategies and Action Plans to scope framework of the Affordable Housing strategy. A draft Table of Contents to be provided by Ms. Chadwick for the next meeting in February. Budget funding required for action items will come out of the 2026 Budget deliberations beginning in July 2025.

Councillor Verbeek requested we consider strategies to help mobile park homes, which were designed initially as an affordable housing option, but land leases have doubled making them no longer affordable.

7.3 2025 Meeting Schedule

AHTF24-11-07

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair
Seconded By Rodney Hammond, Ward 4 Councillor

That the proposed 2025 meeting schedule for the Affordable Housing Task Force be adopted as presented.

Carried

8. Delegations

9. Adjournment

AHTS24-11-08

Moved By Rodney Hammond, Ward 4 Councillor
Seconded By Frasier Fathers

That the meeting be adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Carried

10. Future Meetings

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. - 33 Talbot Street South, Council Chambers.

Chair

Recording Secretary