



The Corporation of the Town of Essex

Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2025, 4:00 pm

Location: Essex Municipal Building, 33 Talbot Street South

Present: Lynda Leopold - Chair
Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair
William Baker
Chris Carpenter
Fiona Coughlin
Frasier Fathers
Fred Groves
Rodney Hammond, Councillor, Ward 4
Dorene Lester
Rachael Mills
Jo-Ann Conrod

Absent: Amanda Morgan
Kim Verbeek, Councillor Ward 2

Also Present: Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services
Marsha Buchta, Planning Clerk, 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 4:05 p.m. Chris Carpenter arrived at 4:15 p.m. Dorene Lester left the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

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 February 11, 2025

AHTF25-02-01

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair

Seconded By Frasier Fathers

That the published agenda for the February 11, 2025 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Affordable Housing Task Force Minutes for November 6, 2024

AHTF25-02-02

Moved By Dorene Lester

Seconded By Fred Groves

That the minutes of the Affordable Housing Task Force meeting held November 6, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Unfinished Business

AHTF25-02-03

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair

Seconded By Dorene Lester

That all the items listed in Agenda Item 6 Unfinished Business be received.

Carried

6.1 Official Plan Project

Director Chadwick provided an update on the Official Plan project. Council has approved the 2025 budget for additional costs to support a local comprehensive review as part of the new Official Plan. This second phase of the OP project is likely to take 1.5 years to complete, however, policies for residential intensification and housing affordability were drafted under the Draft OP and presented to the AHTF in 2024.

6.2 Update on Windsor-Essex Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

Work is ongoing at the County level, although a Draft Strategy has not yet been completed. The Harrow High School and Essex non-profit lands along Fairview were identified as ideal properties in the Town of Essex.

6.3 Update on the Harrow High School RFP

The RFP has been posted and will close on March 31, 2025. As a reminder, 20% of the Harrow High School high density redevelopment must be dedicated to affordable housing. Once the RFP closes, evaluations will be completed prior to Council's decision-making.

6.3.1 Affordable Housing Task Force involvement

Administration continues to examine the possibility of the Task Force's involvement in reviewing the affordable housing component of the

proposals received for Harrow High School. It is recognized that the ability to comment on projects or be informed may help in the development of Task Force strategies. Director Chadwick will consult with the CAO and advise.

6.4 Surety Bonds vs. Cash / Letter of Credit

In late November new provincial legislation was passed stating that Municipalities must now allow surety bonds as an option for Developers to submit securities. Administration is evaluating and revising the Development Standards manual to incorporate new regulations. The first developer request for surety bond use has been received allowing Administration to navigate this new process for the Town of Essex.

7. New Discussions

AHTF25-02-04

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair

Seconded By Frasier Fathers

That all the items listed in Agenda Item 7 New Business be received.

Carried

7.1 2025 Meeting Schedule Revision

AHTF25-02-05

Moved By Richard Kokovai - Vice-Chair

Seconded By Rodney Hammond, Councillor, Ward 4

That the 2025 Meeting Schedule be revised as amended to move the August 12, 2025 meeting to the Harrow and Colchester South Community Room located at the Harrow Arena, 243 McAfee Street.

Carried

7.2 Vacant Home Tax

The County of Essex will be providing a report to County Council on the feasibility of vacant home tax. It is understood that assumptions will be made on vacancy, utilizing water billing via water usage reporting as the determining factor. Programs require increased staff for enforcement and management. Mayor Bondy will forward County Council's report once received.

7.3 Mobile Homes / Land Leases - Strategies to Help

In June of 2024 Administration sent a letter to the province, as directed through resolution by Council, for consideration of a cap on rent increase to prevent significant rent increases in mobile home parks and land leased communities.

AHTF25-02-06

Moved By Fiona Coughlin

Seconded By William Baker

That the Affordable Housing Task Force recommend that Council, further to the letter of support sent on June 27, 2024 regarding Mobile Home Parks and Leased Community, forward another letter of support to the Premier calling upon the

Province to legislate and enforce maximum (caps) for increases to residential land leases, similar to rent control for apartments.

Carried

7.4 Framework for Affordable Housing Strategy Breakout Session

A draft framework document that was prepared by William (Bill) Baker was presented and discussed and will provide direction on the affordable housing strategy moving forward. Members will examine the information, utilizing their expertise and assess Key barriers and strategies within the topics provided. Administration will provide clarification on current status of the various barriers and strategies. Members of the AHTF were assigned the topics and will come prepared to discuss at breakout sessions during the May meeting.

8. Delegations

9. Adjournment

AHTF25-02-07

Moved By Frasier Fathers

Seconded By Jo-Ann Conrod

That the meeting be adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Carried

10. Future Meetings

Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall, Council Chambers, 33 Talbot Street South, Essex.

Chair

Recording Secretary