



MAYOR'S ROUND TABLE
FEB 6, 2018

AFFORDABLE HOUSING –
DISCUSSION COMMENTS

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DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

What is the definition of affordable housing?

- Entry level/starter/retirement housing – meets certain social demographic
- In some cases – unachievable to builders/developers because of building code requirements/changes
- Can have negative stigma / bare bones housing, negative environment – wide spectrum of affordable housing
- Realistic size – 700-1000 square feet
- Accessible/safe
- Allows people to stay in their communities
- Housing people can afford to live in & pay for – smaller homes
- Look at potential redevelopment in existing areas of the community
- Need to look at household income
- Diverse in prices, sizes, locations
- To make affordable housing with lower/average income – need to look at approx. \$7800/month
- A lot of buildings – only 2 bedroom units available
- Need to look at landlord techniques – how they circumvent ‘affordable’ housing
- Look at the entire infrastructure
- Rent that is less than 30% of income
- Less than average rent prices
- Prices that younger families or low income earners can afford
- Appropriate development within all new developments
- Integrate a certain percentage of new development projects to include affordable housing units to integrate into the community
- Entry level housing/starter homes/retirement homes
- Large income retirees skew the household income average for the Town of Kingsville
- Attract and retain populations, stable living conditions
- Young families cannot find affordable housing – no vacancy at \$700-800/month
- Affordable housing is different from geared to income. Some of the geared to income have many problems and are difficult for our seniors to live in. The people who live in affordable houses are happy and feel safe
- A wide range of prices that meet the needs of every household in our community
- Different size houses within all price ranges
- Town is being promoted as a retirement community
- Be cautious about mass affordable housing

- Tailored to people who need the housing

MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES

What type of initiatives should the Town implement to assist in the growth of affordable housing?

- Lower taxation rate
- No development charges – big cost
- Single versus multiple mill rate
- Apartment buildings vs rental rate
- Some other communities have looked at empty schools etc. – retrofitting for assisted living – instead of traditional affordable or social housing
- Incentive of ownership to maintain
- Mandated to builders/developers – but provide incentive
- Look at co-ops – encourage co-operatives through taxation
- Mixed locations
- Cutting down the fees – not just for landlord benefit – trickle down to the renters/purchasers
- Municipal initiatives should not have the same bearing- in the 90's – downloaded from Ontario government – put unfair burden on municipal homeowners
- Should not be municipal incentives as it impacts all home owners
- Reduce taxes and fees
- Zoning, developing of vacant municipally owned properties
- Be proactive – look at reducing lot sizes – to increase developers build per development
- Developers are targeting seniors
- Habitat for Humanity is willing to work collaboratively with developers and town to build affordable housing
- 20% rebate on permit fees for affordable housing
- Developers required to build 20% affordable within development
- Taxation breaks for those who provide affordable housing
- Keep the Heat Program – look at communities that have created complexes with multiple units but have an aesthetic that people would want to build
- Property taxation that promotes affordable housing – must translate into lower rent
- Incentives for landlords that follow through
- Property tax-free for those pursuing affordable housing builds
- Kickback rezoning fees

- Dispersed housing rather than 1 large location of affordable units
- Town subsidizes rent with developer within new units
- Develop neglected/vacant properties – working with developers
- Use medical marijuana tax money to help build
- Lower tax rates on apartment buildings to standard rate

COMMUNITY LAND USE PLANNING

What types of tools do we require to assist in streamlining?

- One of challenges is funding - only available for a block of affordable housing builds – need to lobby to relax restrictions, mixed developments
- Mandate pre-zoning building sites – establish a 20% affordable housing clause
- Broaden range of housing types
- Don't zone for exclusion
- Allow larger/broader housing types within zoning
- An Affordable Housing Development Corporation – funded by provincial & federal governments
- For number of small communities throughout Ontario – planning is of the ultimate importance – need to plan ahead, intersperse affordable housing
- Do not need to change established neighbourhoods by building multi-unit affordable housing
- Need to be established ahead of time – strong planning for locations
- Need to look ahead at amenities, traffic rates/flows
- More clarity on bylaws, zoning
- Good planning – county-wide – should be consistent guidelines
- Look at possibility of old school (KDHS) and property for affordable housing
- Need partnership tools – look to non-profits
- Accountability tools
- Need advocate for the needs of Kingsville people with housing issues
- Definition for affordable housing in Kingsville, partnership tools with organizations and developers
- What does affordable housing look like, provide incentives to developers who incorporate affordable housing
- Changes in rules for affordable housing funding to be more flexible
- Establish town ideals and requirements for builds/projects
- Developments that include affordable housing are given priority
- Need Kingsville-centric stats with an awareness of the County stats too

- Stronger bylaws to preserve the character of the Town
- Ontario Municipal Board lack of access to any incentives – limit construction

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Would an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan be useful?

- Yes – stays at the top of mind, accountability
- Yes – need partnership with all levels of government
- Yes – encourage conversation of current dwellings
- Yes – help keep young people in the community

NECESSITY FOR AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Should the Town investigate the possibility of an Advisory Committee to support affordable housing efforts?

- Yes – keeps the Town pulse on development direction and capabilities
- Yes –but should not include people who would have conflict of interest i.e. developers/builders/realtors
- Yes – but concern re: cost
- Yes – should maybe include some developers/builders – but also seniors, youth, people with disabilities, people who want to live in communal environments, dispel myths
- No – continue with public input, public meetings
- Yes – to advocate to Council, look at best practices in other communities
- No – instead of committee – action-oriented collaboration with defined outcomes and goals

BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

What are the notable barriers to affordable housing?

- Lack of planning – allowing unattractive construction
- Lack of affordable land – high cost for developers
- Need affordable housing that is clean/maintained/safe and fits the fabric of community
- Negative public attitude, discrimination

- No programs to encourage rentals
- Misconception of population who live in affordable housing
- When run by public institution/housing authority – need more accountability for what is going on, funded for 20 years then what happens?
- Large concentration of people in certain area – too many in one neighbourhood
- Stigma / NIMBY (not in my backyard)
- Transportation, urban sprawl
- Affordable housing – more than monetary support, need support services
- Fixing existing or building new?
- Cost
- Expectations – how will construction fit into existing neighbourhoods
- Social exclusion, outside support
- Not cost-effective for developers – prices going up
- Land availability
- Lack of government money, lack of government strategy, political will, waiting for others to act
- “Affordable Housing” is still out of reach for many because of costs
- Money for new builds vs renovating existing
- Understanding the needs of individuals and families beyond the monetary
- Spikes in demand
- Marketing campaigns that bring greater numbers into the community, drastically increasing real estate prices, lowering supply

RECCOMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

What recommendations could be made to improve affordable housing?

- Look at smaller houses
- Intersperse affordable housing through developments/neighbourhoods
- Transportation – currently lack of public transportation
- Need to be near schools, work, and amenities
- Advocacy
- Clear definition of the spectrum of affordable housing
- Defining target groups – seniors, starter homes, retirement
- Lack of physical housing in Kingsville
- Town could offer assistance with first and last month’s rent
- Give incentives to landlords to build/create affordable units – the cost of owning a rental is high, so they need to recoup the expenses through rent
- Make it more accessible to landlords to have affordable housing – not just apartments, but individual house units as well

- Allow for intermingled affordable housing throughout the Town
- Market and develop toward first time and retired home buyers
- By-law enforcement/standards need to be enforced
- Ways to make sure the housing is clean, maintained and fits into the fabric of the community

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING SURROUNDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

What programs do you know of regarding affordable housing in Windsor Essex?

- Access
- SECC
- Central Housing Registry (CHR)
- Essex non-profit
- Essex CIP program (Community Improvement Plan)
- Essex Windsor Housing
- Habitat for Humanity
- 2nd dwelling unit in Essex bylaw
- WEHC – Windsor Essex Housing Connections
- Housing with supports (County of Essex)
- 211 – as a source of information
- The Bridge (Leamington)
- Windsor Housing Authority
- County of Essex seniors programs
- Grants – to make houses more accessible, help seniors stay in their homes

PROGRAMS NEEDED IN KINGSVILLE

What programs are needed in Kingsville?

- Landlord Tenant Board
- Tiny House strategy
- Emergency shelter (strategy)
- More housing
- Targeted planning
- Federal/Provincial programs – help offset costs for those developments that fit the needs and desires of the community
- Collaboration with joint agencies – round tables – to work together to determine concerns

- Rent subsidies
- Town should help developers identify funding opportunities
- Comprehensive affordable housing policy in Kingsville
- Educational
- Accountability for landlords
- For seniors, young families, low income due to disabilities
- The problem is not the program, it is the lack of stock - more programming will not help
- Transportation
- A program that addresses needs of all levels of affordable housing
- Stay in home grants
- Down payments
- Affordable rental homes for seniors
- The Town should not ignore grant money

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

How can the Town improve communications surrounding affordable housing?

- Provide maps, goals – follow-up with report card – have met goals, or struggling to meet goals - ongoing
- Informed staff at the Town Hall that can answer questions – all staff should meet high levels of customer service
- Keep website updated
- Social media
- Continue the conversation – hold additional meetings, public open houses
- Affordable Housing Expo – to keep the community informed – one stop shop with all service providers and support services attending
- Updating sign at Town Hall – notification of meetings etc.
- Educate the public – low income vs affordable housing – de-stigmatization
- Hear from the people who need affordable housing
- Sometimes developers anticipate opposition – need to be honest about intentions
- Should be communication on all major development issues – they are important to the entire Town
- Through media – Kingsville Reporter, radio
- Continue online communication
- Provide notes from tonight’s meeting online
- Target invitations to specific groups

COMMENTS

Other Comments:

- I'm concerned about the speed of development that's happening in Kingsville, and the effects this will necessarily have on infrastructure, quality of life and the small town character that makes Kingsville the best community in Essex.
- The most important aspect of its character is its Victorian aesthetic – keeping buildings low (3 stories or less) and tasteful are key.
- By-laws are needed to keep development in check and within the style and heritage of Kingsville.
- Is compliance 100% to the requirement of our Municipal initiative or a desire to comply?
- Should Kingsville address our needs and planning before openly adopting any requirements?
- Low cost public transportation (bus) would be very helpful for seniors and disabled and those on fixed incomes.
- Locations should be close to doctors, stores etc.
- Good meeting – positive feedback.