



NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING

Campbell East, 3rd Floor

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Directors:

Shirley Cordiner, Chair
Public-at-Large, Fort Erie

Henry D'Angela, Vice-Chair
Councillor, Thorold

Karen Blackley, Secretary
Stakeholder, Thorold

Patrick O'Neill, Treasurer
Stakeholder,
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Betty Ann Baker
Stakeholder, Welland

David Barrick,
Councillor, Port Colborne

Barbara Hannah
Tenant, Niagara Falls

Catherine Jolliffe
Stakeholder, Welland

Ronna Katzman
Councillor, St. Catharines

Kelly Kendrick
Fort Erie, Stakeholder

George Marshall
Councillor, Welland

Karen Murray
Public-at-large,
St. Catharines

John Osczytko
Public-at-Large, Welland

Tim Rigby,
Councillor St. Catharines

Minutes

NIAGARA REGIONAL HOUSING Board of Directors Meeting

#122 – 2013

NRH Boardroom
Campbell East, 3rd Floor
2201 St. David's Road
Thorold, ON

May 24, 2013 – 9:00 A.M.

Attendees

Directors/

Members: S. Cordiner, K. Blackley, P. O'Neill,
K. Murray, K. Kendrick, T. Rigby, G. Marshall,
J. Osczytko, H. D'Angela at 10:32 A.M.

Regrets: D. Barrick, B. Baker, C. Jolliffe, B. Hannah, R. Katzman

NRH Staff: L. Beckwith, M. MacLellan, M. Fearnside, W. Thompson,
V. Amato,

Regional Staff: K. Chislett, Commissioner Community Services
D. Mino, Program Financial Analyst

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 9:03 A.M.

1. Adoption of Agenda/Declaration of Conflict

Moved by T. Rigby

Seconded by K. Blackley

That the agenda be ADOPTED.

CARRIED

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1. Minutes of the April 26, 2013 Meeting

Moved by K. Murray

Seconded by K. Kendrick

That the minutes of the May 24, 2013 meeting be ADOPTED.

CARRIED

Business Arising

2.2. Smoking By-Law

Item 4.4. in minutes of last meeting regarding report to PHSS about Smoking by-law. Staff have advised Public Health that all NRH buildings display signage indicating that there is no smoking in public areas within the building or within 9 meters of public entrances. NRH partners with Public Health on smoking cessation program. NRH is investigating the possibility of making Fitch Street a non-smoking building.

3. New Business

3.1. NRH Website, Selection System and Priorities - Report 13-122-3.1.

M. Fearnside provided a general overview of the upgrades made to the NRH website related to accessibility; more detailed information is now available on the modified features of the housing provider buildings and units; the website was also reviewed from an applicant and housing provider perspective.

M. Fearnside made a presentation, for information purposes, on the challenges of establishing priority groups; Priority groups account for 5% of the waitlist yet they receive more than 50% of the available units.

The priority groups (SPP, H&S, and HML) move the chronological applicants further down the waiting list; chronological are waiting longer periods for housing and are receiving less of the available units.

M. Fearnside reviewed the challenges associated with reviewing and approving applications for Health & Safety. There is heavy reliance on doctor's letters to support the application. These letters must be very specific and must substantiate how moving will greatly improve the health of the applicant. Most letters are very general and staff are put in the position of making health decisions that they are not qualified to do.

It was suggested that perhaps a Public Health Nurse Practitioner could evaluate H&S applications and complete a form.

All categories on the waitlist are increasing due to need. Many on the list, particularly seniors would probably qualify for H&S, but not all apply for it, for whatever reasons.

Another issue is that of overhoused tenants, who although not a priority group, are living in units that are not appropriate for their household size. There are backlogs trying to accommodate these households in alternate units. Under the current process for overhoused, on average, it takes up to five years for an overhoused household to move.

A board report will be submitted to the board for establishing priority groups, in the near future.

3.2. Selection System for Applicants – Report 13-122-3.2.

*Moved by K. Kendrick
Seconded by T. Rigby*

That the NRH Board of Directors APPROVES the following:

- 1. That the current chronological waiting list selection system be maintained; and,***
- 2. That a choice-based pilot project be implemented for modified units.***

CARRIED

3.3. Vineland Co-op – Report 13-122-3.3.

*Moved by K. Murray
Seconded by K. Blackley*

That Niagara Regional Housing Board APPROVES the removal of one vacant 2-bedroom market unit from Vineyard Co-operative Homes' stock for conversion to office space.

CARRIED

3.4. End of Operating Agreements (EOA) - Report 13-122-3.4

A report on expiring operating agreements was presented to the board. Housing providers' operating agreements will start to expire in the near future with Federal providers starting in 2014; Federal/Provincial providers in 2020; and Provincial providers will starting in 2026.

When operating agreements expire, any associated federal funding also ends. Service managers are required to maintain a certain number of geared-to-income units (service level standards) and there are concerns as to the service manager role and responsibilities once the operating agreements and mortgages end. Clarity on service manager obligations has been requested from the Province.

The Federal providers are not included in NRH service level standards. When their agreements, mortgages, and subsidies end, our relationship with the federal providers will also end. It is in the service manager's best interest, however, to ensure the federal housing providers remain financially viable when their agreements end so that they can continue to provide affordable housing.

Staff assessment of the Federal housing providers indicates that all will be financially viable at the end of the agreements, with the exception of 3 who have a high rent-geared-to-income percentage in their units. Staff will be working with these federal providers to put a plan in place to ensure they remain financially viable when their agreements expire.

*Moved by K. Murray
Seconded by T. Rigby*

That the NRH Board RECEIVES report 13-122-3.4,. EOA for information

CARRIED

Staff was requested to insert housing provider names in place of ABC's in Appendix B of 13-122-3.4.

Action by: M. Fearnside

3.5. Housing & Homelessness Action Plan Priorities & Governance – Report 13-122-3.5.

A draft diagram to replace the one on page 7, Appendix A of the report was distributed. Since printing of this report, the title of Niagara's plan has been changed to *A Home for All*.

Action items will be incorporated into the NRH Business Plan.

H. D'Angela joined the meeting at 10:32 A.M.

3.6. NRH 2013 Market Rents – Report 13-122-3.6.

Staff reviewed highlights of the report which will affect about 6.3% of NRH households who are paying Market Rents. Current market rents for bachelor units in Welland and detached family homes in Niagara Falls are considerably less than affordable rents in those two areas/for the same unit size. It is recommended that rents for these two dwelling types be phased in over a two year period. For all other units, the proposed rent increase will become effective after the usual 90 notice.

*Moved by K. Blackley
Seconded by G. Marshall*

That Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors APPROVES the proposed 2013 Market Rents for the owned units, effective September 1, 2013 as highlighted in Appendix "B" of report 13-122-3.6.

CARRIED

3.7. Banking Resolution – Report 13-122-3.7.

*Moved by T. Rigby
Seconded by H. D'Angela*

***That, Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors APPROVES:
1) Signing authority for the corporation as defined in this report; and,
2) Signing of the Master Client Agreement with the Royal Bank.***

CARRIED

3.8. Updated Director Handbooks

New Director Handbooks were distributed

4. General Manager's Report**4.1. Financial Statements as at April 30, 2013 – Report 13-122-4.1.**

*Moved by P. O'Neill
Seconded by K. Blackley*

That the NRH Board of Directors APPROVES the financial statements as at April 30, 2013.

CARRIED

Currently there are no areas of concern. Page 2 provides a statement of "below the line" items. Chris McQueen, Director of Financial Management and Planning & Deputy Treasurer, will be making a presentation on these items at the next meeting.

4.2. Model Validation and Forecasting – Affordable Housing Programs

NRH was asked to have an independent 3rd party validate a model that compares three program costs (owned units/ housing provider units/ rent supplement program units) and future projections for the same. Consultant cost will be just under 50,000+tax; KPMG was the successful bidder.

*Moved by T. Rigby
Seconded by P. O'Neill*

That the NRH Board of Directors APPROVES moving forward with KPMG as consultant for the Model Validation project.

CARRIED

5. Chair's Report

S. Cordiner thanked K. Murray for her excellent work and enabling a smooth transition of duties of Chair.

D. Barrick is taking part in "4 Buds in a Bunky" charity event. And T. Rigby was wished a happy birthday for tomorrow.

6. Closed Session – not required

7. Committee Reports

7.1. Appeals

Minutes of the April 16 & 30, 2013 hearings Appeal Hearings were provided for information.

7.2. Investment Committee, H. D'Angela, Chair

Minutes of the August 9, 2012 meeting were provided for information.

Moved by K. Kendrick

Seconded by H. D'Angela

That the NRH Board of Directors RECEIVES the committee reports.

CARRIED

8. For Information

8.1. Action Items from Previous Meetings

Correspondence/Media

No other information was reported.

9. BREAK – Not required

10. Presentation – see items 3.1.

11. Other Business

There was no other business

12. Next Meeting

Friday, June 28, 2013
NRH Board Room
Campbell East, 3rd Floor
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13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 10:52 A.M.

*Moved by K. Murray
Seconded by T. Rigby*

CARRIED

Minutes Approved:



Chair



Secretary