
CITY OF VERNON

HOUSING FORUM



APRIL 15, 2010



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INTRODUCTION

In response to the rising costs of market housing and lack of affordable rental stock, the City of Vernon formed an Affordable Housing Committee in 2006. Over the past four years, the committee has been very active and has succeeded in facilitating the creation of an Attainable Housing Strategy and overseeing its implementation. Last year, the committee sponsored a newspaper insert with information on affordable housing and an overview of projects in the Vernon area. As a follow up to these initiatives, the group identified the need for an interactive and educational housing forum. As a result of the ACT grant, the committee was successful in hosting a forum on April 15, 2010. The evening event had two components; an open house with interactive booths and a speaker series on specific topics related to affordable housing. The event was viewed as a success due to the number of participants and the positive feedback received from the evaluation surveys.

AGENDA

The following booths were open to the public between 5:00pm – 8:00pm:

Organizations
BC Housing
BC Hydro
Built Green
Canadian Mental Health Association
City of Vernon: Affordable Housing Committee
CMHC
Habitat for Humanity
Hesperia
Independent Living Vernon
Interior Health
John Howard Society
Kindale Developmental Association
Lake Country Modular Homes
Land Trust
Okanagan College
Real Estate Foundation
Twelve Cubed
Under One Roof

The following speakers were scheduled between 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm:

Time	Name/ Biography	Information Session Synopsis
5:00 pm	Kim Flick is the Planning & Building Services Manager for the City of Vernon.	<p>Changes to Development Cost Charges</p> <p>The City of Vernon is currently implementing changes to development cost charges. Kim provided an overview of the changes and how they pertain to affordable housing in Greater Vernon.</p>
5:30 pm	Dale Rintoul is a planner with the City of Vernon.	<p>Housing Covenants/Secondary Suites</p> <p>Housing covenants are relatively new to the City of Vernon. Dale provided a sample of a housing covenant and explained when and how this affordable housing tool is implemented. Dale also covered information on secondary suites and how they are registered and approved in the City of Vernon.</p>
6:00 pm	Celina Owen has been with the Real Estate Foundation since 1998. As Manager of Communications & Administration, she plays a key role in internal and external communications and grant review.	<p>Real Estate Foundation:</p> <p>The Real Estate Foundation supports many innovative projects, including research that pertains to land use and real estate policies and practices in BC and the construction of affordable housing. Celina provided an overview of the real estate foundation grant policies and showcase projects that have been funded by the Foundation.</p>
6:30 pm	Howard Rensler is a past president of Canadian Home Builders Association – Kelowna.	<p>Canadian Home Builders Association</p> <p>Howard spoke on the importance of CHBA with respect to affordable housing. The session highlighted past accomplishments and outlined how CHBA can contribute to affordable housing by bringing ideas/issues forward on behalf of developers and builders.</p>

7:00 pm	<p>Annette Sharkey</p> <p>Annette is the Executive Director of the Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan and the Coordinator of the Partners in Action Team. Part of her role is to help coordinate community efforts to increase the number of affordable units in Greater Vernon.</p>	<p>Working Together: Non-profits and Developers</p> <p>Annette outlined the strengths provided by partnerships between non-profits and developers and highlighted models from other communities that could be adapted in Vernon.</p>
7:30 pm	<p>Rob Kjarsgaard</p> <p>Rob is the Administrator for Trades and Apprenticeship for Okanagan College in Vernon.</p>	<p>Okanagan College - Residential Construction Program</p> <p>Rob described the Residential Construction program and featured some projects that have been built in partnership with the program. He also discussed how to partner with the program to build housing projects for not-for-profits in the Okanagan.</p>
7:45 pm	<p>Myles Gregory BC Hydro Power Smart</p>	<p>BC Hydro</p> <p>Myles Gregory is a Power Smart Specialist based in the Interior whose focus is to make it easier to utilize Power Smart programs and embrace conservation. He outlined some basics on conservation decisions during the construction process as well as what support is out there for developers and residents.</p>

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 150 people took part in the housing forum. The breakdown is as follows:

Speakers/Booth Operators	There were 42 people who participated as either speakers or booth operators. One organization had six tenants take part in their booth presentation. Many of the agencies and businesses took advantage of the networking opportunity the forum provided.
Participants	Almost 100 people signed in at the reception desk. Of those who indicated, 22 people were from the business sector, 30 from the non profit sector and 38 from the general community. Not everyone signed in at the reception desk or marked which sector of the community they represented.
Event Organizers	Eight members of the Affordable Housing Committee took part in organizing the event and overseeing the activities and speakers for the evening.

SURVEY RESULTS

Booths:

We had 16 responses to our evaluation survey on the Open House portion of the forum:

Did you find the information booths useful?

(8) Very Useful (8) Somewhat Useful (0) Not Useful

Comments:

- *New material to consider*
- *Very helpful in getting information re subsidized housing through CMHA & IHA*

As a result of the information provided, did you get one or more ideas/contacts you intend to follow through on?

(16) Yes

(0) No

- *Garage with possible suite above is a possibility rather than renovating basement*
- *List of low income housing sites*
- *Yes, have a daughter with disabilities who needs housing*

Are there other organizations/businesses you would like to see at future forums?

- *Affordable housing information*
- *Faith Community*
- *Elizabeth Fry Society*
- *Observation – lack of representation of organizations who promote lifestyle change for hard to house*
- *Foundations – funding source experts*

Which City of Vernon policies encourage affordable housing? Which policies make building affordable housing more difficult?

- *Increase/Expand Permitted types of housing*
- *More joint Ventures*
- *Reduced DCC's - encourage*
- *Social Planning encourages*
- *Secondary Suite Policies*

Speakers:

We had 15 responses to our evaluation survey on the Speaker Series portion of the forum:

Which session(s) did you attend?

- (3) 5:00 pm - Changes to Development Cost Charges
- (6) 5:30 pm - Housing Covenants/Secondary Suites
- (8) 6:00 pm - Real Estate Foundation
- (4) 6:30 pm - Canadian Home Builders Association
- (4) 7:00 pm - Working Together: Non-profits and Developers
- (3) 7:30 pm - Okanagan College - Residential Construction Program
- (2) 7:45 pm - BC Hydro

Did you find the information sessions useful?

(10) Very Useful

(5) Somewhat Useful

(0) Not Useful

Comments:

- *Liked the example of project at Sunshine Coast*
- *Appreciate website information*
- *I became more educated*
- *This was a very nice presentation.*

As a result of the information provided, did you get one or more ideas/contacts you intend to follow through on?

(9) Yes

(3) No

Comments:

- *Need to talk to Contractors and other parents of children with disabilities to brainstorm on how to proceed for housing & care for people on PWD*
- *Not immediate, but probably in time*

Are there other topics/presenters you would like to see at future forums?

- *Green energy – proactive and affordability*
- *Public transit/cycling/co-op cars etc.*
- *Examples of innovative partnership projects and how they did it.*
- *Workshop facilitated by a non-profit on supportive housing. Read they have 170 units for vulnerable people – Impressive!*
- *Smart growth (in greater detail)*

CONCLUSION

The City of Vernon's Affordable Housing Committee is committed to working with the wider community on housing solutions. Events such as this public forum are vital for the continued success of the committee's initiatives. It was encouraging that the majority of the surveys indicated that participants found the event useful and even more encouraging that most people indicated they had been provided information or a contact that they intended to follow up. The Affordable Housing Committee will incorporate the feedback from participants into the planning of future events.