

## **PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE – OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE 2021**

***Held: 4:00 PM, Monday, October 18, 2021***

***Location: Zoom Meeting***

### **SEVENTH PUBLIC MEETING IN 2021:**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER:**

##### **1. Director of Development Services**

Ms. Giddings welcomed the public to the meeting.

The Director of Development Services welcomed the public to this meeting

#### **2. PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **1. Town of Perth Affordable Housing – Bradley Wright, Director of Development Services**

The Director of Development Services provided a review of the purpose of the Official Plan and an overview of the Affordable Housing Jurisdictions. The policies are high level plans that can be implemented through various by-laws.

Definition of Affordable Housing – is considered to be housing costs that are less than 30% of household income, before tax. This can cover a wide variety of housing options including rental, ownership, cooperative ownership as well as temporary and permanent housing. The median income for the Town of Perth is \$54,000 (2016 Census data). 30% of the average income is \$1350/month. There is a large demographic that this average monthly rent is still unattainable.

#### **Affordable Housing Jurisdictions**

All levels of government are involved in finding solutions to affordable housing – Federal, Provincial, Lanark County, and the Town. The Town and other rural municipalities have limited funds and staff available putting additional expectations to fund and promote affordable housing initiatives. With appropriate policy and seeking funding from the province there is potential for small municipalities to work on affordable housing solutions.

#### **Housing Landscape in Lanark County**

There are over 600 people on the County's waiting list with one bedroom apartments in highest demand. The number of people over 65 years of age is double the provincial average with this anticipated to increase by 44% by 2032. It is anticipated that the need for senior's housing will be in high demand. The waitlist is up 10.5% from 2018 – 2019.

The current need is for one bedroom apartments. With the aging demographic there may be a need to downsize requiring additional housing options. Perth is among the highest on the Rent Geared Income (RGI) waitlist in the County with wait times almost 2 years. More than 55% of renter households are paying in excess of 30% of their gross income on housing. It is anticipated that this will be higher for 2021 census.

## Town's Progress

Different Planning tools to address affordable housing issues

1. Zoning by-law amendment from 2019 from the *More Homes More Choices Act* to add an additional unit and additional dwelling on the same lot. Zoning for the Town of Perth has been updated to promote infill in anticipation of more affordable housing options.
2. Official Plan Amendment – the current monthly Official Plan Update 2021 meetings
3. Community Benefits Charge Study – providing social benefits for developments with 5 or more storeys. The Town could look at units taller than 5 storeys that could take advantage of the community benefits charge.
4. Development Charges – in September the Town waived Development Charges for new additional dwellings and dwelling units as part of the *Covid Emergency Measures Act 2020*.
5. Community Improvement Plan – currently used for façade benefits for business. Could create a separate CIP for affordable housing to provide incentives, grants or loans for existing homes to support affordable housing initiatives.
6. Inclusionary Zoning – report indicated that the Town is too small to take advantage of Inclusionary Zoning. With significant future growth the Town could re-consider this option.
7. Grants or other innovative ideas from other municipalities. An Affordable housing grant of \$5000 is available for anyone who wants to build a tiny home or additional dwelling unit on their property.

## Secondary Unit Grant Program and Process

Council approved \$50,000 in the budget for 2021 with a maximum of \$5000 grant funding to be awarded once the project is complete. Available for new construction of secondary units for homeowners who reside on the property for long term rental.

The application process needs to be efficient. Applicants have limited knowledge of the planning, zoning, building, and municipal review process. Town staff are working on a step-by-step process to help homeowners through the planning and building process. Uptake is slow as the highest number of residents who have paid off their mortgage and do not need to build a rental suit. Looking at 20 – 40 year old demographic to help with mortgage repayments.

The Director reviewed the current policy and made some suggestions for new policy and other activities.

## Public Discussion/Chat Comments Q&A

**Comment:** Define what “Affordable Housing” means for the Town of Perth. In Canada, “**affordable housing**” is considered to be housing that costs less than 30% of your household’s income (before tax).

**Comment:** There are few people who want to live in a tiny house the size of a large garden shed in someone’s back yard. This needs to be re-examined. Concerns

regarding the type of tenant that would be drawn to living in a small home. Consider providing a definition of 'tiny'.

**Comment:** As you age, the warmth of a tiny home is a plus! The massive homes in Perth must cost a fortune to heat.

**Q:** Is there a maximum size up to which a structure may be qualified as a tiny home?

**A:** Depends on the size of the house/lot, but the maximum is 720 sq. ft.

**Comment:** Is the town required legally to offset costs of Inclusionary Zoning? It would be instructive to show the value of "lost" revenue compared to the total revenues for the developer in the two case examples. Is there an ability to make this the "price to play" for developers. Create a policy if the developer does not have a large enough development to include affordable housing that the developer pays a set amount into a fund to be applied to other future affordable housing developments.

**Comment:** Inclusionary zoning costs may be substantially less where development costs are reduced such as the cost of land or cost of services. If land is surplus government land, the costs may be less and if servicing costs are based on existing available services by the door, the costs could also be less. Fails to look at the upfront costs of land and services. If the municipality or government has additional land that could be released for affordable housing could reduce the land development costs. If the land is already serviced then there will not be increased servicing costs. The broader the framework for affordable housing policy the more opportunity to provide incentives for developers.

**Q:** Could the \$5,000 grant program be extended to institutional and commercial building conversions such as places of worship and upper storeys of commercial buildings as well as conversions of existing housing stock? There is an underutilized housing stock in the Town that could be better used through co-leasing and co-operative housing. Could the Town embark on a demonstration house as an education project for the residents?

**A:** Any proposal that deviates can be provided to Council.

**Q:** Given the free market economy outside of RGI how are the secondary dwellings going to be of an affordable rate? Unsure if these will be affordable units as these could be used by younger couples or families to offset the cost of their mortgage.

**A:** If a developer works with the Town to provide affordable, then an agreement would be in place for X number of years with an agreed upon rental rate. This will depend on the agreed amount for affordable housing.

**Q:** Were residential parking minimums discussed as part of the affordable housing planning tools? Would the Town consider unbundled parking where a resident does not have a car they would not require a parking space. Could that lower the cost of units?

**A:** There is potential to offset the development costs by reducing the parking requirements. This requires further investigation.

Mr. Cockburn – NAIMA Canada, president of local homebuilders association. Offered to assist with the development of educational material - online, asynchronous, and free of charge. A 'retrofit concierge' might be a worthy consideration for the Town and the County. Look at better, affordable housing that is energy efficient housing with low operational costs. There are European models that cost \$24/year to heat and cool.

Consider prep-fab Multi Unit Residential Buildings (MURB) built off site for energy efficiency. Consider building 20 units together as a multi-unit apartment building of tiny homes.

Mr. Cockburn has developed a short course on [Residential Renovation](#), specifically dealing with older buildings. It is free and geared to the average person. Excellent resources available through [Better Homes Toronto](#).

Look at '[Aging in Place](#)' funding through CMHC and '[Sustainable Affordable Housing](#)' through FCM.

**Q:** Not sure if the actions of individual home-owners is going to scratch the surface of our affordable housing problem. It would be more efficient to use municipal surplus land, combined with a non-profit housing developer. There are a number of new non-profit developers operating in Ontario:

- [UPRC](#)
- [New Commons](#)
- [CAHDCO](#)

May need to reach out to them rather than waiting for mission-driven developers to come here.

**A:** Public – Private partnerships are possible. It will come down to staff time capacity and the resources to move forward. Can be put on a list of things to do.

**Comment:** The Table would be more than happy to help convene and host a meeting or meetings with non-profit and co-op developers to look at municipal lands that could be used for affordable housing.

**Comment:** Consider long term investment in cooperative and community housing as market pricing is not going to meet this need of affordable housing. All tiers of government have a role to play in achieving this goal.

**Q:** One step would be to publish a map of existing municipal lands for residential development and meet with current non-profit housing developers and those involved with co-operative housing development to see if there is potential for a collaboration on building new affordable housing that is not market-based.

**A:** The Town has done a study and compiled a list of surplus industrial lands.

**Q:** The city of Ottawa and perhaps Kingston as well are using "bonus floors" as an incentive for apt. buildings.

**A:** This is called Density Bonusing and is already in the Official Plan. This is being phased out by the province for community benefits charge.

**Q:** At present can you give an example of a residential development proposal where there was a pre consultation in regards to Affordable Housing and what price points were being used when you had the pre consultation? Is there some method by which the public can be shown that these pre consultations are or will be taking place? Is there a report that can be made available to the public so residents can determine whether these pre consultations are actually taking place?

**A:** The Town of Perth is a small municipality and developers cannot offset the costs of providing affordable housing. Questions arise from this to seek funding to offset these costs, can the Town afford to reduce development charges, and is this simply a requirement and a cost of developing in the Town of Perth. The Town is trying to promote more housing, diversification of housing and affordable housing.

**Comment:** Could the Town look into trying to do a long term 1\$/yr lease with the Province to convert the former Perth Jail into single bedroom apartments?

**Comment:** Unfortunately it sounds like although there are some pretty amazing policies in the Official Plan they are, without teeth and therefore not being implemented and developers are not being required to follow them. This is very frustrating but happening in all the lower tiers here in Lanark County. The only way we will make a dent is through Inclusionary Zoning which will not likely happen.

**Comment:** Affordable housing for really low income is the County's job and a small town does not have the income to provide this assistance. The Town needs to be clear on what is meant by affordable housing.

**Comment:** Concerns to protect the greenspace and to enhance them instead of trying to build homes on the greenspace. This will improve the quality of life in Perth.

**Comment:** Sounds like the Town of Peth is going to be a senior's community due to aging demographic. Try not to have too many single bedroom units as the Town needs to attract young families.

### **Links and Additional Contact Information**

Good link on [parking](#).

[Housing types](#)

[Mr. Cockburn](#) 613-264-5319

## 2. **NEXT MEETING:**

**November 15, 2021 4:00 p.m. Topic: Review of the Policy Statements from the first half of the year.**

3. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting concluded at 5:31 p.m.