



**WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
February 4, 2021**

PRESENT: Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair
Christine Qin Yang, Vice Chair
Lilian Barraclough
Tanya Boudreau
Holly Mathias
Mallory LeBlanc
Haneen Al-Noman
Charla Dorrington

OTHERS PRESENT: Councillor Kathryn Morse
Councillor Paul Russell

REGRETS: Councillor Lisa Blackburn

STAFF: Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor
Tracy Jones-Grant, Executive Director, Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO
Haruka Aoyama, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. and the Committee adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 7, 2021

MOVED by Christine Qin Yang, seconded by Lilian Barraclough

THAT the minutes of January 7, 2021 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

MOVED by Holly Mathias, seconded by Christine Qin Yang

THAT the order of business be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence

The Chair noted that there was no correspondence received.

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentation

7.3.1 Women's Housing in Halifax, a Community Perspective – Miia Suokonautio (YWCA Halifax), Heather Byrne (Alice House) and Lisa Mullin (The Marguerite Centre)

The Chair invited Miia Suokonautio, Heather Byrne and Lisa Mullin to present and lead discussion on Women's Housing in Halifax, a Community Perspective. They introduced themselves and their respective organizations to the Committee and explained that a goal of this session is to build an understanding of housing as a gendered issue and of its impacts in Halifax.

They provided an overview of the *Home for Good project* conducted in collaboration by YWCA Halifax, Elizabeth Fry Society Mainland Nova Scotia, Alice House, and The Marguerite Centre. The *Home for Good* is a 3-year project on women's housing in Halifax, that investigated the barriers women face when trying to access safe, secure and affordable housing in community once they have left the transition and second-stage housing systems.

In response to questions from members of the Committee, Miia Suokonautio, Heather Byrne and Lisa Mullin made following points:

- The research was conducted using a narrative methodology (narrative analysis) and survey. It was not an empirical study.

- Women who participated in the interviews were located within the HRM; however, these people came from different communities

The Committee watched a video titled ['Home for Good – Video #1 Centring Women's Voices'](#)

The presenters shared information about what is happening with respect to housing in the HRM today:

- While some people are homeless, thousands of people are housing insecure. Some are insecure because of affordability issues. Women who are living in substandard homes or who face domestic violence at home may be especially impacted. Domestic violence has increased as people are asked to stay at home due to COVID-19 related public health measures. Women who experience domestic violence often have nowhere to go and cannot safely leave their home safely to seek help and find alternative places to live
- Lack of support for African Nova Scotians is a particular problem

The Committee watched a video titled ['Home for Good Video #2 – Desperate for Housing'](#)

The presenters discussed '*what is the role for Halifax Regional Municipality in addressing women's housing*' and raised the following points:

- Providing housing services outside the regional center of the Halifax Regional Municipality is needed
- Ensure that a landlord training module or certification program is a requirement for Landlord licensing (if that comes into effect)
- Ensure that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles are incorporated in all building permit applications
- The Committee asked if there are any certain requirements for affordable housing in the city as many are not in good locations for women and families or not in good condition. In response, the presenters indicated that residents can call 311 to report poor housing situations. The presenters also recommended that the 311 service be given further support. With further support, 311 service could provide more compliance officers to investigate complaints and assist those who are housing insecure. It was noted that women often do not report poor housing conditions because of fear of eviction, not being taken seriously, or losing favour with the landlord.
- Prioritize reviews of community plans and land-use bylaws to ensure consistency across the HRM to remove barriers to affordable housing
- In response to questions from members of the Committee, presenters answered that the Women's Advisory Committee may recommend that all policies made in Halifax Regional Municipality use Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+)
- Support/offer educational programs like "I rent it right" and the Renter's Ed program

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Presentation on Municipal Affordable Housing Initiatives

The following was before the Committee:

- A presentation entitled Affordable Housing Initiatives in HRM dated February 4, 2021
- A handout: A staff Report to Regional Council November 17, 2020 entitled: Municipal Affordable Housing Initiatives – Update on the Affordable Housing Workplan

Jillian MacLellan, Planner III, Regional Planning provided an overview on HRM's Affordable Housing Initiatives by introducing terminologies and concepts to help the Committee understand more about the municipality's role in housing and regional planning.

Due to time limitations, Committee members were not able to ask any questions of Ms. MacLellan. The Chair announced that the Committee will continue discussion on the item 9.1.1 with Jillian MacLellan in the next meeting scheduled March 4, 2021.

9.2 COMMITTEE

9.2.1 Work Plan

The Chair asked the Committee to review the draft Work Plan prior to a next meeting (March 4, 2021) and showed their intent to finalize the Work Plan during the next meeting.

The Committee will continue their discussion on housing in the next Meeting.

10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – March 4, 2021

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Haruka Aoyama
Legislative Assistant