

Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

Minutes of the HOUSING WORKING GROUP Extraordinary Meeting Tuesday Sept 11, 2018

Location: Journey Home

Attended: Loren Balisky (Kinbrace)

James Grunau (Journey Home)
Saleem Spindari (MAP, MOSAIC)
Theresa Harding (Metro Vancouver HPS)
Peter Prediger (Inasmuch)
Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)
Mindy (New Hope CSS)
Raul Gatica (Kinbrace)
Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets received: Celine Mauboules, Marika Albert, Warren Jacobs, Mariana Martinez V., Khim Tan

Co-chair: James Grunau

- **James welcomed** everyone to the meeting – introductions.
- **Mindy and Bob (New Hope CSS)** will act as alternates for each other.
- **The Minutes of June 21** were approved.
- **The Agenda** was approved with a request to add:
 - discussion on how housing referrals are being made now that IRS no longer exists – TABLED to 27/9
 - Tenancy Branch Information Sessions – TABLED to 27/9 and receipt of more information

The purpose of this Extraordinary Meeting is to inform and request the support of the HWG for actions taken and agreements made over the summer months so that the Action Plan can be presented to MAP at the next meeting.

Housing Working Group Summer Updates

Introduced by Loren and Saleem

- **Province of BC Meeting and subsequent Contract – Loren**

BACKGROUND: Loren provided background to forum in May – report – action plan

Province responded – \$70,000 provided to assist with implementing the Housing Forum Action Plan

Timeline: Sept 1st – March 31st.

Loren explained the 4 areas of work: *(summary document attached - Towards a Housing Solution for Refugee*

Claimants in BC)

1. Increased capacity of MAP: 2 days/week (+ existing 3 days/month)
2. Coordinated person(s) to look for housing for RC's
3. Public education including website and myth busting etc.
4. Asset -mapping of the RC experience and housing needs/solutions

Questions:

Who will be responsible for getting the work done?

1. Jenny will be the admin support and link for the project
Jenny will also drive the public education piece – and form a new Information Working Group
2. Need to hire someone to run the research project
 - Tammy mentioned a consultancy in Abbotsford
 - Loren is already in contact with an excellent candidate from UBC (via Dan Hiebert)
3. Theresa has agreed to chair **Advisory Group** which connects well with her systems level work at BC

Other possibilities for the Advisory Group:

Dena Kae Beno (City of Abbotsford – Homelessness & Health)
Provincial rep. (BC Housing?)
Jenny
UBC researcher
Refugee Claimant
Khim (Options)
HWG chair – Loren

Suggestions: Raul suggested the Advisory group needs a housing searcher – like **Patricia Mahecha**

Theresa suggested **Amy from Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism** (federal). They are going back to providing more community-based support – Amy has the needed experience with refugees and immigrants.

James suggested that the survey and recommendations would become a crucial document to use in the future.

4. Person to look for more innovative housing – need to find new ways. Based on people who have experience in housing search.

Comments:

Saleem: need to capture all the info we learn to share with member agencies and provide in reports.

Tammy: need another event next year to build on Forum – maybe the web launch?

Teresa: it should be possible to create templates and tools for new housing solutions.

• Federal IRCC meeting – Saleem

Jenny and Saleem requested a meeting with Deputy Minister Harpreet Kochhar and Director General Louis Dumas when they were scheduled to visit BC – both are in touch with the refugee influx across the country esp. DG Louis Dumas in Quebec.

Meeting took place for about 45 minutes on Aug 1st with Saleem, Mariana, Loren and Jenny attending.

Asked Feds to recognize MAP as the voice for housing needs of RC's in BC

- also hoped that part of \$3m publicised as being available for RC's might come to MAP
- also asked for federal help (\$\$) to help with modular housing offer (land purchase)
- funds for MAP
- creation of MAP as a L.I.P.

We met with 7 individuals from IRCC both local and federal specifically involved with funding RC programs. The meeting was very positive, and we believe that MAP is now definitely 'on the map' at a federal level.

UPDATE FROM SALEEM: City of Vancouver will be more involved with MAP meetings – Baldwin, Nadia will attend

Reimagining Refugee Claimant Housing and Support in BC's Lower Mainland - James

This document emerged as a natural progression from the Housing Forum as many participants had suggested that a 'one-stop-shop' for RC's would be ideal. The document (*attached 2*) imagines an ideal for RC's: what would it be like to have a center where all RC's could be referred to for support, emergency housing, case management, and eventual referral to 1 of 3 streams of permanent housing.

It would be great to fund this without govt. funding e.g. Burnaby is providing 50 homes. There's a church that is thinking of providing the land needed. It would be great to have just one place, so RC's don't have to move around so much.

Who will champion this plan? MAP should take this on. It needs to be done right with the benefit of RC's at the center.

Discussion:

The document was presented to the Federal IRCC meeting, but not to the Province

Saleem: maybe it would be advisable to postpone action on the document until after the survey when more opportunities appear, and we are on firmer ground.

Comment: **Mindy** suggested that ISSofBC's Welcome Center is the best integrated model, but it is not ideal when there is a big influx of GARS.

A separate center for RC's would be a plus and in the future MAP and ISS will be working more closely together towards common goals. e.g. SOS's new housing searcher, Rami Alkishawi, will be attending HWG meetings and Bahr (Refugee Hub) will be providing a monthly statistical update to MAP.

Raul: don't stop dreaming!

- Feds can accept this model if they see MAP as the mouthpiece of RC's
- to be most effective the center should be built elsewhere than City of Vancouver.

Teresa – need to ask for right size of modules – for families
location – south of Fraser would be good.

Loren – reimagining doc looks at these details - a Collaborative document and Action Plan

Outreach and awareness raising strategy - Jenny

Jenny explained that it's important to let other groups and areas know what MAP HWG is doing, and to listen to the needs, comments and questions of groups who come across RC's in their work.

In June Jenny wrote to the list of Homelessness Task Forces provided by HPS. Many of the groups welcomed a presentation about RC's and MAP's plans to search for new housing solutions. Some municipalities responded with definite dates for meetings, others offered to meet in the fall and some were not set up yet.

Teresa – some municipalities aren't as organized yet and may be in the process of set up.

PRESENTATIONS COMPLETED AND/OR CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:

- Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Group Meeting:** September 7 – Loren presented and was well-received as apparently it is known that RC's live there and need services.
- Burnaby** - 9:15 a.m. Tuesday, September 11th - James
- North Shore:** Sept 12, 10 - 12pm NVD Hall – Jenny
- BC Settlement and Integration Day:** October 16 Loren / Jenny
- BCNPHA** presentation 19 Nov 2018 – Loren + MAP

There are other opportunities that need speakers – Jenny invited the HWG to sign up and thus spread the load. There is a PowerPoint presentation available to adapt and use (*attached 3*). Members are asked to submit notes and contacts made after each presentation. This information is being captured and will become part of organizing the survey as well as a final document.

UNCONFIRMED SPEAKERS: we still need speakers for the following opportunities

- HSABC Conference Day 3:** Friday Sept 21: Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport, 8181 Cambie Rd, Richmond
This has a \$100 fee – the co-chairs will discuss the decision to attend and who.
- New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society** meeting September 26 at 9:30 – 11 am
- New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society: Connect Day Event** - Oct 9
- Ridge Meadows/Katze LIPS or Family Education** – Tammy once we have more details.

RFP on Emergency Housing Response – any information?

Saleem noted that not much is known about the RFP or if anyone applied.

The membership noted it was disappointing MAP had not been informed previously about the opportunity.

NEWS:

- **Inasmuch** – new house coming on line soon

- **Patricia (IRS)** doing a knowledge transfer to **MOSAIC**.
Teresa – Patricia had 90 RC's/month – who is supporting them?
Mindy mentioned that possibly **Mobin** is starting his own organization like IRS
- **Airbnb update: Saleem** stated that Airbnb has made a \$50,000 offer to provide RC's with housing via ISS and/or MOSAIC

As there was no other business the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday September 27 – 12:30 – 2:30 pm after MAP meeting at ISSofBC Welcome Center.