MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEETING

Thursday May 23, 1pm at MOSAIC: 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver

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PRESENT:
Alisa Cook (inasmuch)
Derek Chu (Kinbrace)
Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope Community Services)
Saleem Spindari (MAP and MOSAIC)
Imtiaz Popat (Rent to Refugees)
James Grunau and Doug Peat (Journey Home)
Julia Wu (BC211)
Gaston Ntabaza (SOS)
Mandana Salimian (Red Cross)
Jenny Moss, Barry Growe and Melissa Kwan (MAP)

Regrets: Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Peter Prediger, Richard Belcham and Tammy Johnson (inasmuch)

Co-Chair: Derek Chu

Derek welcomed everyone
Introductions were made
Outline and approval of Agenda – Approved
Minutes from April 25th meeting – Approved

Information working group report:

Jenny talked about how with the funds from MJTT, 2 different brochures and 2 pop-up banners for MAP have been made available. MAP's current event is on June 20th – World Refugee Day. The Information Working Group, comprised of provincial representatives, NGO's and RC's are helping with this event. If your agency did not have the chance to sign up for a table at the World Refugee Day, please let Jenny know and she will put you on the list. Jenny will send an email with all the details of the World Refugee Day. The event will be located at the Vancouver Public Library – Central Branch on Georgia Street. After WRD the IWG will close for the summer.

Governance and co-chair appointments next meeting

Derek: Co-chairs are a one-year appointment and the governance will end in June. How do we want to move forward with the election of the next co-chairs? Do we want to elect?

It has been discussed that **Derek** would be willing to continue being a co-chair. **James** is also willing to continue co-chairing for one more year as well.

James: We want to bring up this co-chair governance topic today so that we are prepared for next month's election and nomination for co-chairs.

Saleem: Since we did not mention the co-chair appointments to the General MAP meeting members earlier today, in next month's meeting, we can talk about the nominations that we are proposing and if nobody suggests an alternative or steps up, we will go along with HWG's suggestions.

ACTION: Jenny to mention the nomination opportunity in her email attached to these Minutes.

Discussion on the MJTT report

Derek: (On a call on Tuesday May 21st) Vicki said the report was well received and has been passed on to different ministries in the Province. The Ministry did have some concerns about making this report public as it is. She listed all the concerns and amendments to be made: remove section 6 (policy directions and funding request), remove all appendices (except for appendix 3: stories told by RC's), rework conclusion and executive summary and release to MAP members only; minor amendments were also suggested. Vicki also suggested that after removal of section 6, if necessary, they could create a PowerPoint presentation on the content of section 6 to facilitate any further discussion with MAP membership. Vicki then explained her reasons for why she doesn't want the report to go public yet.

It has been clarified that we are now working on the version of the report that went to the Ministry.

Derek: Since Vicki told us not to send the report out yet, we have told Pomegranate to stop working on it and to stop looking for a graphic designer as of now. The main concern Vicki had was section 6: policy directions and funding request (the recommendations) as well as the appendices, especially the first appendix. We need to have a report with recommendations, so we are now trying to make a compromise, since some people want to keep the recommendations while others may not. So in today's meeting, we will discuss whether we will go with the suggestions that Vicki made or come back with a counter-proposal for the Ministry.

Doug: I believe the report is made for the provincial government and thus is public, so it concerns me that the government could be shutting down recommendations.

Jenny: Just a point to clarify, there is going to be a major announcement in June that goes up to the federal level. I think it's worth us waiting to see what happens, because we have a lot of interests and if we rush to get it into the public view, it might put us in a difficult position.

Saleem: As we are viewing the report, we should keep in mind that the Ministry funded the report and is now overseeing it but wants to get rid of the policy and recommendations because they have political consequences.

Derek: Since we promised Vicki we would get back to her in the next day or two, let's discuss: are we accepting her suggestions or are we making a counter-proposal?

Doug: I'd say we should not do anything, and we should not make it a public report until after the public announcement.

Imtiaz: I agree. We should wait so that we can include the govt.'s opinions in the report.

James: Yes, we'll withhold the report from making it public until we hear from the govt. This might be a good compromise.

Jenny: Yes, I think it is a viable alternative to wait.

Saleem: As HWG, I think it's best for us to provide recommendations to Vicki.

James: Just to clarify, we are saying we will not do anything for now?

Derek: From a Kinbrace perspective, this report is not just for the province but also serves as an information guide for different agencies serving RC's. The report provides information for these agencies to better help out RC's. So we should keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to keep the policy and recommendations section.

James: Are there any other opinions? What is the consensus about Saleem's comment?

Alissa: I think it's strange if we leave out all of the recommendations.

Jenny: We don't have a lot of time to do this, so we should ask what our aims are.

Alissa and **Jenny** discussed how the report would be sent out to the MAP membership.

Alissa: In my experience working with RC's, there is no straight line in approaching this issue.

Mandana: The recommendations are not a stand-alone portion so there is a benefit to include them, but it is not essential. The findings are enough to show the organizations' challenges with housing.

Derek: In the report, in Section 6 there is the context and benefits section and then the policy recommendations with costings, which is the most sensitive to the Province. When I talked to Vicki, I asked if we could take this sensitive part out, but keep the actual description of the recommendations, the context of it and the benefit of the recommendations and from my understanding, she is willing to do that.

James: I would want a report that is public, one that we could share to MAP members, stakeholders and the public.

Ann: A softened language of the word "recommendations" would be a good idea, since a report without recommendations is not the best.

Julia: I agree with Ann, keeping recommendations is good.

Derek: Can we agree to keep the recommendations and descriptions and benefits with softened language, but leave out the policy and directions section that is sensitive to the Province?

Since there are no objections, it has been agreed that HWG will get back to the Province with the above suggestions. Everyone agrees that the amended report should be made public as a reference for other agencies.

James: Do we agree to remove the appendices?

Doug: Personally, I feel that the appendices should be included. In the appendices, we did not include "lets have specific units" capital needs for refugees in the appendices or report. The report did not include capital needs of agencies.

Derek: The problem is that the appendices are too specific.

Mandana: Is there any way we can include some of the appendices into the report? That way we can retain some information that BC Housing might find important.

James: We should keep the report that Barry and Doug worked on because there is a lot of valuable data in that report so we should make it available to use.

Derek: So can we have consensus that we are going to use the appendices as separate documents?

There has been consensus that we will take the appendices out (except for 3 and 6), and use other ones as separate documents, and not a part of the report.

Jenny: Appendix one has to go, but Doug and Barry's report should be included.

Derek: We can report to the Ministry that our proposal is to take out the first appendix, Alice Sundberg's report and then keep appendix three, five and six (MAP's agency listings).

It was been decided that Derek will make the changes and send the email for Jenny to forward to MAP Executive members, and then see what Vicki says. This work will be done in the next day or two.

Process for moving forward on possible applications for any future provincial funding

Derek: Are there any proposals for how to make possible applications for any future provincial funding?

Jenny: What is MAP's role in the proposals for future provincial funding (to MAP)?

Saleem: Just to provide some background information, we went to Vancity and asked for funding from Vancity, which they agreed to provide through 2020.

James: The question is how do we present a united and collaborative front to the Province as MAP and agencies?

Doug talked about his experience in receiving one-way funding when working with the Vancouver Board and Trade Policy Committee.

Imtiaz: The provincial government tends to pick on certain agencies in terms of funding and that can become a problem. Word might be communicated to a certain agency, but if there's collaboration, we can better help each other. A conversation has to happen in terms of who takes on which role, and what that process of collaboration could look like between agencies.

Jenny: Yes, it is very hard to get funding that is not one-way. My daughter worked in the downtown east side and her agency only got one-way funding. Other agencies were left out.

Saleem: We should work to get funding from all sectors.

Mandana: My suggestion is for Housing Working Group to be a mentor to all MAP member agencies who want to apply for funding. We have inside knowledge of the report, even if we can't share recommendations, we can still speak to them in a way in which every agency can then incorporate the information we give into their application so that everyone can get the money. They can also run their application by the executive or MAP before submitting it.

James: Yes, that is one recommendation. Any other suggestions? We should put some recommendations out on the table now and decide on the best one.

Doug, **Saleem** and **James**: To take the load off of MAP, MAP could go to a third-party agency, such as Vancity.

Mandana: If they (MJTT) give all the money to MAP, we could still get agencies to go through the application process through MAP, and hopefully this will make for a more objective evaluation of the application if it is to go through everybody.

Julia: Is MAP going to hold money? Because in the past MAP has been approached to get funding for something, when in fact, it should go to the individual agency.

Saleem: Correction: We accepted the money and we asked Kinbrace to administer it.

Julia: How do we demonstrate how to maximize what we can do? If we get this much funding, what can we do to use the funding effectively?

Jenny: In next MAP's meeting, there will only be one presenter, so James and Derek can discuss in detail about this topic.

Meanwhile Spaces issue and forward momentum

Barry: We are underway with our project. We need a framework of agreed upon procedures and tools; we can do this by speaking to municipalities and agencies. We recognize that MAP can discuss some of these policies. The issue revolves around the need to make agreements with these entities, whether it's developers who own land, municipalities etc.; this is where the agreements will be carried out and signed.

Barry: At issue is liability and insurance: owners want to know that they would not be liable if their building is damaged and that they are fully covered.

One suggestion that has risen is that we go to agencies such as Kinbrace and Journey Home and ask them to quantify the amount of staff it takes to provide follow-up services that people need. If we have a sense of that, then we will have a sense of how much meanwhile spaces we can support if we staff up. Some suggestions are that it might involve one agency hiring someone or each agency hiring someone, or due to costs, it could mean agencies working together to fund. Another issue is making sure the building owner does their job. It is assumed that the owner of the building will maintain the properties, because agencies should not have to pay to fix a roof, for example. What are your thoughts on this Letter of Agreement?

Mandana: Does this replace the lease agreement?

Doug: When you are making this statement, you are really declaring the person as living in a transitional housing unit (temporary housing unit), therefore it is exempt from the Residential Tendency Act, so you are not bound by the rules of the RTA.
Julia: Given that it's not a regular agreement, say the developer agrees to maintain the property and then later says he will demolish it in 2 months, in this case, what recourse does the agency have to hold the property owners to this?

Barry: That's why we added what liveability means.

Jenny: So you are saying you would depend on this agreement as binding? But it does not actually have any legal standing right?

James: It was not the HWG's idea to provide something that would work for everybody, but to provide some basis for these agencies to develop their own.

James: A question to consider is: What would your organization do around the topic of liability and insurance?

Jenny: Everyone will get an email with the report and the document covering the meanwhile spaces topic.

Adjourned: 3:00 pm.