



MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday September 26, 12:30 pm

ISSofBC Welcome Center, 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver

PRESENT:

Tammy Johnson and Richard Belcham (inasmuch)

Jenny Lam, Khim Tan (Options)

Meaad Alharbi (SOS / ISS of BC)

Julia Wu (BC211)

James Grunau, Doug Peat (Journey Home)

Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST/MAP Co-chair)

Patricia Mahecha (Strathcona Health Society)

Derek Chu, Ryan Reid (Kinbrace)

Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Dustin Lupick (HSABC), Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope Society), Barry Growe (MAP), (MOSAIC) Alexandra

Co-Chair: Derek Chu (Kinbrace)

Derek welcomed everyone - Introductions

Outline and approval of Agenda – Approved

Minutes from June 27 meeting – Approved

UPDATES

- **HSABC and BCNPA Conferences**

James provided a background on the 2 conferences MAP HWG is presenting at:

1. HSABC Conference that afternoon (Sept 26) at Radisson Airport Hotel.
2. BCNPHA Conference (Nov 17) at the Wall Centre, Vancouver

We have been asked to present to one of the break-out groups and provide a background on who is a refugee and the claims process as well as describe housing challenges for claimants. There has been a committee of Dustin (HSABC), James, Tammy along with Iris (Options) planning the first conference that will consist of:

- Interactive Simulation of a refugee experience (following inasmuch model)
- Description of claim process
- Introduce MAP and its functions
- Provide an interview with a claimant – story
- Q&A

HSABC has a new director to replace Celine – Steven de Souza

The BCNPHA conference will follow the same format.

- **CCR Resolution on Housing adopted June 2019**

Doug Peat (Journey Home) submitted, with assistance, a resolution to the Spring CCR Consultation in Victoria that was adopted by the Settlement Working Group. (*See the resolution and all earlier Housing resolutions adopted on the last page)

Hope that the resolution can be a tool to use when talking to govt at different levels.

Q: is anyone following up with CCR to learn what's the next step? Is anything more needed?

Mariana (Co-chair of the Inland Protection Working Group at CCR) explained that an 'Action Plan' is created out of select resolutions. The Settlement Working Group supported the Resolution but it is not a priority at present (focused on Bill C97 outcomes at present: irregular border crossings and new PRAA process)

Mariana suggested that MAP HWG push for a **caucus** to be created out of the resolution to bring the issue forward at the November Consultation in Montreal and future meetings. We still have time to bring forward caucus suggestions.

Mariana also mentioned that members can always participate in the Virtual Meetings that take place regularly – to be one in October. Mariana will introduce the idea and guide whoever wishes to speak in how to present the ideas for a caucus.

- **Derek asked Doug to follow up.**

BUSINESS

- **Follow-up Discussion on the Project Proposal from MJTT**

Derek described the process MAP will go through to fulfill the MJTT requirements for the Project Proposal: **Refugee Claimant Housing Referral and Management System.**

The Project Proposal is based on 2 recommendations in the recently approved for publication MAP HWG Report: Towards a Housing Solution for Refugee Claimants. **(see in Members section of www.mapbc.org)**

MAP Co-chairs and HWG Co-chairs have created a process and a set of criteria by which to measure the suitability of applicants who will work together with an Advisory Council and MAP / HWG Executives. The process and criteria were adopted at the morning MAP meeting by the membership in a vote.

Discussion:

Options wants to see evidence of how the lead agency will work with smaller agencies as already happening.

Response: we do expect the lead agency to approach others to work together.

What is the role of the Advisory Council?

Response: It will have especial expertise – possibly technical, or in transition housing – to guide the lead agency. It will also be a way of providing for accountability. Members of the HWG may be members, but the work will not be assumed by the HWG.

Richard explained the RACI methodology – the identification of who is responsible/accountable/consultable and informed in the process. The roles of each element: MAP Executive and HWG Co-chairs, lead agency, Advisory Council and MAP membership at large, must be very clear.

How would lead agency fit in?

Response: We will have to work all this out with the chosen lead agency but at least the Lead Agency will be the Project Team head.

We have many more questions for MJTT which we will put to them in a meeting next week.

This week we will invite interested agencies to submit **their Expressions of Interest** by midnight on Thursday October 3rd for a meeting of the Executive & HWG Co-chairs to decide on Friday Oct 4th.

- **Update and Discussion on Meanwhile Spaces**

Doug Peat:

This has been a HWG research project for some time – looking for empty spaces that could be filled by claimants for a minimum 6 months – preferably 1 year.

Doug has been working with Nancy Holme of Echo West Developments (www.echowest.ca) who made some suggestions:

- 1) suggests we seek legal advice to protect our interests and the claimants
- 2) look into insurance issues
- 3) agency involved would need to be a legal entity in order to collect rent

Meanwhile Spaces project formally requests to be recognized as a MAP project – interested in focusing on Burnaby and Tri-cities areas to start with.

Questions:

- Could the Meanwhile Spaces team become a sub-group of HWG with a monthly report-back procedure?
- If this group finds lots of available spaces can MAP handle it?
- Is this group a MAP HWG or a Journey Home project?

HWG agreed that Meanwhile Spaces has been a **MAP HWG research project** – but that agencies interested will forge their own contracts and can work independently on their own Meanwhile Space agreements with developers and municipalities. Furthermore, it was agreed that MAP Executive should be informed when the Meanwhile Space team wants to meet with a potential housing provider, especially municipalities, so that meetings can be formally organized and there is a report back and accountability structure going forward.

- **Discussion on HWG's Role Going Forward**

The working group discussed HWG's role going forward – with the MJTT project and other projects like Meanwhile Spaces:

Questions:

What is the crossover with the new Advisory Council?

Response from Richard: the Advisory Council will have a much wider area of expertise and domain – it is not the same as the HWG

James commented that HWG still has lots to do – predict 3,500 RC arrivals this year (50% increase).

Doug: this is an area of great vulnerability for RC's – we need to do everything possible to limit the number of RC's having to enter the shelter system

Patricia agreed – and added that HWG must also pursue the objective of real housing for RC's

Many agreed we need to know what MJTT has in mind for the balance of the funding.

Khim: HWG needs to continue to increase available housing stock.

➤ **DECIDED:** HWG will continue as an active MAP working group.

- **MAP HWG Representative at the Shelter Coalition**

James reported that HWG has been asked to provide a rep to the Shelter Coalition (an umbrella group of shelter providers).

The chair is Scott Small, and he asked for a MAP rep to the quarterly meetings.

Alexandra nominated **Tammy (inasmuch)**

Everyone in agreement

James will ask for more info and liaise with Tammy.

Next Meeting: Left open as James and Derek are both away in October.

***CCR Resolution on Housing**

Res.3, Jun 2019

Whereas:

1. [Housing is a human right](#);
2. Canada's affordable housing crisis is impacting all medium to low-income Canadians, including immigrants and refugees. The impact of building further affordable housing through the National Housing Strategy will take time and does not address the crisis of today;
3. Social assistance levels allocations are not adequate given the high cost of rents. The need for affordable housing outstrips what is presently available;
4. The lack of shelter and dedicated services geared to arriving refugee claimants is creating a crisis within existing shelter systems and is increasing homelessness;
5. Refugee claimants face absolute homelessness upon their arrival. Presently, refugee claimants are not eligible for the same supports as government-sponsored or privately sponsored refugees;
6. Safe and affordable housing is critical to the successful settlement of refugee families and individuals;
7. The CCR passed Res.: 5 , Nov 2005 on housing;

Therefore, be it resolved:

that the CCR:

1. Call on all levels of governments responsible for housing and settlement to allocate more resources for accessible and affordable housing and to review the provision of adequate income and social assistance levels to facilitate access to safe, secure and affordable housing for all refugee claimants.
2. Urge the inclusion of refugees and refugee claimants in the development and allocation of affordable housing projects.
3. Encourage all levels of government to fund the development of appropriate short-term housing solutions for arriving refugee claimants, which include settlement services.

[The right to access to safe, secure and affordable housing](#)

Res.5, Nov 2005

Whereas:

1. Safe, secure and affordable housing is a resource that plays a critical role in determining overall health and well-being and provides a base from which immigrants and refugees can seek employment, re-establish family relationships and make connections with the wider community;
2. Immigrants and refugees are facing absolute and hidden homelessness problems in Canada;
3. UNHCR Reception and Integration Handbook, ch. 2.8 (A Place to Call Home) outlines guidelines;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That the CCR:

1. Write to all levels of government responsible for housing and immigration settlement to allocate more resources for affordable housing and to review the provision of adequate income and social assistance levels to facilitate access to safe, secure and affordable housing.
2. Promote the best service guidelines in the area of housing developed by the UNHCR, ensuring that governments and service providers commit to the housing guidelines, and provide the support and resources needed to enable those guidelines to be maintained.

Homelessness

Res.4, Dec 1999

Whereas:

1. There is a national crisis of homelessness and lack of affordable housing;
2. Immigrants, refugees and visible minorities face significant racism in the private housing market;
3. In some large cities in Canada, newcomers make up a large portion of the shelter population;
4. We deplore the "passing of the buck" by which different levels of government deny that newcomers' housing issues are their responsibility;
5. Across the country income assistance rates are unrealistic considering housing costs;
6. There are many problems in accessing income support services across the country;
7. We applaud the new southern Ontario project of issuing ID to assist claimants at port of entries in accessing services;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That the CCR:

1. Write to the Federal Coordinator on Homelessness urging her to pay particular attention to the challenges facing homeless newcomers and especially newcomer families;
2. Communicate with the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada and join with them in calling on the federal and provincial governments to immediately start increasing the supply of social housing;
3. Write to CIC urging that as part of the national strategy on homelessness:
 - a) They implement information referral services at ports of entry to ensure that refugee claimants are not entering the homeless shelter system without appropriate resources to access the system and to ensure that a claimant's early months in Canada are the least traumatic possible and to ensure that they have an appropriate place to go when they leave the port of entry;
 - b) They extend eligibility for ISAP services to refugee claimants;
4. Write to provincial governments urging them to raise social assistance rates.

