

MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday September 24, 2020 - 1:00 pm online

PRESENT:

James Grunau, Doug Peat, Barry Growe (Journey Home Community)

Derek Chu, Ryan Reid, Moe Zaqout (Kinbrace)

Richard Belcham, Tammy Johnson, (inasmuch)

Jenny Lam (Options)

Ann Ball (New Hope CS)

Gaston Ntabaza (SOS / ISS of BC)

Alexandra Dawley, Marzieh Nezataf (MOSAIC)

Dustin Lupick (HSABC)

Nicole Stinson (BC Housing)

Sheryl Peters (BC Housing) - GUEST

Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Joni Rose (MJEDC), Scott Small (Catholic Charities Men's Hostel), Caro Lander (Belkin House)

Co-Chair: Derek Chu

- Derek welcomed everyone – Brief introductions
- Outline of Agenda – Approved
- Approved: Minutes of June 25, 2020

Updates:

- **HWG Co-Chairs Q&A with BC Rent Banks on August 14** (<https://bcrentbank.ca/>)
Derek: The presentation was made by himself and Doug at a meeting of BC Rent Banks that exist all over the lower mainland. The purpose was to explain the refugee claim process to Rent Bank managers to see if claimants would qualify for rent bank loans.

They were asked about length of claim process – established that claimants are here long enough to pay back any loan.

Suggested: HWG member agencies can write a letter of support for a client providing a character reference and explaining they are good for the rent for a RC who wants an emergency loan – they are usually emergency, small loans for 1 or 2 months to help individual meet their rent.

Doug – be careful not to endorse individual as much as the Canadian protection system, just in case someone does renege on a loan.

James asked if this information should go out to MAP generally

Derek/Doug/Jenny: Agreed this would be useful to all MAP member agencies

→ **Jenny** to send out info to MAP through bulletin: link to website and other info received earlier.
Please find also attached to these Minutes.

Richard: Coordinator of the Rent Bank is Melissa Giles, previous MAP member with MCC.

Julia Wu (bc211) questioned if claimants need to be working not on income assistance to qualify? Derek/Doug both stated that it's been set up that loans can be made to individuals on assistance. Rent banks have an agreement with the ministry to deduct from one's income assistance to pay back loan.

- **HWG Co-Chairs Call with Scott Saul on working with HSABC - Doug**

Scott Saul wanted to see how the shelters (via HSABC) could work closer with MAP – they would like to refer claimants in shelter to our transition homes if there are spaces available. We would then need to let shelters know when we have space.

This might address the interest in assisting single male refugee claimants in shelter.

Doug asked Julia (bc211) if this is something they already do?

Julia: about twice/day they update shelter availability – not the reverse.

Richard: The CHARMS program will address this

Doug: per diem funding a possibility if MAP decided to provide this information.

- **Update on BC CHARMS project - Alexandra**

- Introduced Marzieh Nezakat – new CHARMS Coordinator at MOSAIC

Marzieh has considerable experience working with refugees and vulnerable populations and has worked in settlement sector before. She has a PhD in linguistics and has what it takes to coordinate this project!

Other news:

- Hosted 5 advisory committee meetings
- Changed project name to BC CHARMS (BC Claimant **H**ousing and **R**eferral **M**anagement **S**ystem)
- Currently recruiting a Technical Consultant – an intermediate between advisory committee and the team from a tech company we may use. To help us create a Requirements Document that includes all the possible users/their needs/and technical needs in more detail.
- **Marzieh (MOSAIC):** We are designing an online Survey – 2 purposes:
 - 1) looking at stakeholder activity now, what the situation is now

2) and their needs of referral system, system users, what reports needed, what's on the dashboard etc. After there will be 1:1 interviews to get more in depth information.

- **Alexandra:** compiled a detailed stakeholders list by city: to circulate to CHARMS Advisory Committee and HWG
- Marzieh also completed a detailed scan of different software including Apricot – question is can we use Apricot, or a form of this software, or do we need to create something from scratch?

Questions:

Have you looked at Salesforce software?

Yes, Vanessa brought it to the CHARMS committee, but MOSAIC agree that there are some limitations in terms of user

→ Alexandra to send out list of possible software to HWG

Business:

1. Discuss and Approve Updated HWG Terms of Reference

Draft HWG Terms of Reference were provided with the Agenda.

Doug: The review was undertaken to ensure that communication is smooth at all levels of HWG activity as the committee is a sub-committee of MAP.

- reviewed purpose of HWG as stated (see TOR attached)
- Membership – participation at 2 levels: members and advisors
- Co-chair roles – elected within HWG: added 2-year terms, communication with MAP Exec.
- Decision making – prefer to reach an agreement, can vote, carried by 2/3 of agencies present, one vote per agency, proxies permitted. If there's a stall, then the issue needs to go to general MAP membership.

Question: James: 1) should the process of nomination and election be included?

2) should there be a required time, or a lapse, between when a co-chair serves and can resume the chair? If so, how much time would that be?

Doug: these two points were not discussed.

James: suggested this should go to MAP for inclusion in main TOR **Richard AGREED**

→ **Jenny:** to add in co-chair election process and look for information on terms of standing and gaps between periods of service. Insert in the TOR and circulate ahead of the meeting for approval.

2. Setting Criteria for MAP Members to Receive a Letter of Endorsement/Support for their Project

Derek: This action arose out of a need to clarify MAP's role when different agencies apply for the same funds. It is understood that MAP is a collective of agencies serving refugee claimants and not a body who can dictate the use or distribution of available funds. So, while the HWG will encourage dialogue and collaboration about projects and applications, the committee will not decide what applications will be made or how any funds should be divided between agencies.

What MAP can do is provide Letters of Endorsement and Support for projects if they satisfy certain criteria: The co-chairs suggest the following 3 criteria to begin:

- Projects must serve refugee claimants
- Project must be based in BC and serve communities in BC
- Project must be aligned with the recommendations listed in the report:

Towards a Housing Solution for Refugee Claimants in BC report to MJTT 2019. (see www.mapbc.org Members section for the report)

The committee reviewed the criteria and were asked for suggestions of other criteria to be included.

Alexandra – could we stipulate that agencies should not duplicate projects?

Response: MAP can't really do that – MAP would support both

Doug: Maybe the agency should need to explain the need for it's project in a specific area?

James: Is this to do with MAP largely or just HWG?

Response: Richard: let's pilot at HWG – look at wider issue later

Richard listed the reports recommendations:

Based on report strategic criteria:

1. Collaborative capacity
2. Safe housing options – combined with access to temporary settlement and assistance
3. Comprehensive and distinct from other refugee types
4. Reception center
5. Communication strategy – this relates largely to MAP
6. Collaboration with municipalities – how we would work with local authority.

Tammy was concerned that a project needs to score on all these points?

Response: Richard suggested HWG could have a scoring process so that criteria can be checked.

Doug was a little concerned about scoring one against another.

Richard defended the letter of support saying that it will be written in a spirit of neutrality and support.

James: maybe it would be best if the project had to meet a minimum of 4/6 criteria

AGREED: the matter goes to further discussion

3) Presentation: Sheryl Peters, Provincial Director at BCH The Community Housing Fund RFP

Sheryl kindly provided an overview of the Community Housing Fund RFP process that can be viewed here.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/994VQU5LsyT8EWCedY4e7LTWzEpZjN0OcfWTzATFDm4eBn-C2kZ08ToESILbfMS0kym_pInd3dpwflee.KY_2cPfXRZfiHVn2

Sheryl's slides are attached

Some major points:

- BC Building program is a 10-year program – this is 2nd offering as it was started 3 years ago.
- 7 projects have already been selected since May – you have till Jan 15 to submit

- The Program administration goes through a process to see who gets the funding
- This program is for new projects/new housing
- This presentation suggests how to put a proposal together.
- There is support to financing as well as capital grants
- All necessary forms are on the website
- There are Development Consultant Services available
- Each project must use a Project manager – go via BCNPHA to get one
- BC Housing wants projects to succeed – but there are rules and BC Housing has final say.
- Do apply and keep forging relationship with BCNPHA – via Peer-Daniel

Derek thanked Sheryl for her presentation and said HWG will keep in touch.

4) Discussion on a forum/workshop/roundtable with BCNPHA

(Please see attached document: Zoom meeting between BCNPHA and MAP HWG Co-Chairs Sep 2,2020)

Derek, Doug, Richard and Jenny had a discussion with Marika Albert and Peer- Daniel Krause to look at developing further our relationship, and specifically:

- How can we teach BCNPHA members (landlords etc.) about claimants?
- How can we learn what landlords are looking for in a tenant?
- How to support claimants in creating positive relationships?

We all agreed that this was a positive engagement and on the following goals:

Short term goal: To remove short terms discriminatory practices

Plan: – Richard / Jenny to work on a publication for BCNPHA newsletter

Medium term goal: to make more units available from existing supply

Plan: - HWG to present at November BCNPHGA roundtable
- a BCNPHA housing provider to present to HWG

Long term goal: Advocate for new housing for claimants

Questions:

Tammy: would this be similar to previous forum – who would attend?

Derek: the forum is to bring housing developers together and work on recommendations

Tammy was concerned we would be bringing on new work when we haven't finished what we're presently doing.

Nicole – encouraged HWG to take advantage – BCNPHA is a wonderful opportunity.

Meeting ADJOURNED AT 2:30PM. The remaining Agenda items were TABLED

Next meeting: Thursday October 22