



MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday February 18, 2021 - 1:00 pm online

PRESENT:

James Grunau, Doug Peat, Barry Growse (Journey Home Community), Derek Chu, Ryan Reid, Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace), Richard Belcham, Tammy Johnson, (inasmuch), Julia Wu (bc211), Jenny Lam (Options), Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope Community Services), Joni Rose (Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Mahi Khalaf (SOS-ISSofBC), Dustin Lupick (HSABC), Julia Wu (bc211), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Chair: Derek Chu

Welcome and land acknowledgement

- The Agenda for this meeting was approved.
- The January 28, 2021 HWG Meeting Minutes were approved.

Updates

- **Update on BC CHARMS project**

Report Book: the results of interviews and online survey are going into report. BC CHARMS team is analysing the aggregate data, which includes some very interesting facts.

Working on first draft to be ready mid-March for the graphic designer to work on it and finally published by early April in 5/6 languages once MUNI approves. It will be very easy to follow so it can be used by many different stakeholders.

Database – working on the systems document that will complement what we have in Software Requirements Document.

Questions:

Can we get CHARMS report in time for BCNPHA roundtable. Between 12 – 21 April?

Response: the later the better – end of April would be better – we do not want to create pressure for this roundtable.

Joni/Richard – concurred. We would prefer a later date.

Marzieh added she would really like to see the BC CHARMS data be of use for our discussions, so appreciate the patience.

- **Update on Roundtable with BCNPHA and MAP – Doug**

Welcomes the relationship-building tone of Jackson's email that provides for a roundtable discussion (and not a webinar at this point)

Richard's article: <https://bcnpha.ca/resources/infolink/> pg. 37 set an excellent foundation for the discussion.

Doug asked others from the task force to comment:

(Taskforce) Discussion on webinar/roundtable format and timing. All agreed we are aiming at a small, informal roundtable discussion for the first event where people will feel empowered to speak up. (Based on early discussions with BCNPHA).

Jackson has been informed of the taskforce's view and asked to provide BCNPHA's vision.

Doug encouraged all HWG members to make suggestions on how to make an online event participatory.

Discussion comments:

- If it's on Zoom it should be very structured with clear goals and topics per time period, use polling or Q/A to be interactive.

- What are the take aways at end of meeting? Because BCNPHA has members who do not know who RC's are, prefers idea of MAP presenting who refugees are, followed by informal discussion. Data not so important – stories are more important.

- From a training and development perspective – perhaps suggest a panel instead of roundtable – with pre-set questions. Do a fact sheet for people to take away.

Doug will take this discussion back to the group.

Business

- **Discuss Response to MUNI's request on wording – Derek**

The Ministry wishes all published comments on the proposal to be in the form of questions. So that although they will publish our letter, they asked permission to state questions in this format:

"[Paraphrased from letter] Why will the 4.8 million be spent only on renovations? Is it possible to change the scope of what could be funded to include the capital costs for purchasing rentable housing that does not require renovations?"

Joni Rose stepped out.

Deadline to respond to this request was before this meeting – so the HWG did respond. We are mostly concerned about the idea of capital costs: so we countered with this line: ... purchasing rentable housing that may or may not require renovations.'

The Ministry will release a FAQ in response to all questions on February 26.

Feedback from many – this was a great letter: Derek added that it was a team effort.

- **Continued Discussion on Preparing for an Influx of Refugee Claimants: ALL**

Joni Rose provided an update from **MUNI**:

- We are aware and monitoring the situation, many unknown factors at play with the timing of potential border re-opening and the outcomes of the Safe Third Country Agreement ruling.
- We are thinking through the possible impact holistically, housing being one important component.

- We met with BCSIS Stream B providers to gather their thoughts and would welcome MAP member's perspectives and suggestions. Please let us know of anything you are hearing, or you think we should take into consideration as we plan.
- We will communicate out more information when possible.
- Really challenging because there are so many unknowns.

MAP Exec: because the implications of a greater influx of claimants go beyond housing needs, and because MAP Executive believes this to be an important sectoral issue, at the next 2 MAP meetings we are going to be addressing this issue:

- **March 25 meeting:** there will be 2 speakers – UNHCR and Canadian Red Cross - walking us through the realities/possibilities/ challenges: what we need to think about, how we need to plan for this unknown emergency.
Go away as agencies and think about gaps/resources and come back with ideas.
- **April 22 meeting:** ideas and creative planning with the whole sector and come up with a matrix to cover areas geographically and needs.

May – in a position to put a formal plan from MAP BC together that Joni can take to MUNI and others in government.

From HWG perspective there will be an obvious need for housing so HWG will be central, realizing that housing is also one among a long list of needs that will have to be addressed.

Questions:

Will there be recommendations coming out of this process:

MAP: yes, we will aim to provide a substantiated document that will state:

- a) these are the resources we can put in place
- b) these are resources that agencies/communities are in a position to provide in addition
- c) these are the gaps
- d) how much it will cost to fill the gaps and an ask to government.

Barry underlined that planning is essential – failure to plan is the gravest error. We are fortunate to have Barry's experience at Red Cross to inform and guide us.

Comment: in the past much of the burden of influxes is borne by the shelters so it will be important to engage our shelter partners (ref: to assistance to Romanian refugees)

Comment: shelters cannot take on much more because of Covid limitations. They are concerned about the needs here so we will need to think strategically and communicate well to avoid overwhelming shelters.

MAP: Communications will be key – MAP is sector wide so it will be critical for coordinating together and with the government.

- Can we do a wider collaborative function to avoid duplicate/parallel planning?
Is the Province waiting for MAP?

MAP: Exactly – we have all the members looking at this at the table already: Provincial govt, CBSA – so they can be invited to these two meetings, especially the April session where we hope they can connect once we have accomplished some basic planning. Can invite health authorities, emergency bodies etc.

MUNI – cannot say much, it will probably be parallel though the Province will see it from their perspective – so that each agency will need to think through how it will impact their agency and come up with ideas and needs.

Comment: and it also depends on how the emergency unfolds: trickle or flood? Provincial and federal government will activate an emergency response with specific partners if all of a sudden a lot of people appear (like boat people)

Comment: may be other people – e.g., returning citizens – needing help; they could put strain on services if they do not have financial means to access housing etc. There will also be the strain post-pandemic of Canadian residents who do not have the means and are demanding more help – e.g., food resources. So, we need to think of other populations beyond claimants.

MAP: – yes, we need to look at impacts in our regions. Plan in parallel, but also feed information back to MAP as a central point of planning.

SOS-ISSofBC – during the pandemic we have seen a slow down and a change in how we do our work and the necessary adjustments. If the borders open and we need to respond to bigger numbers as in 2016/17 it will be a shock to need to gear up again. ISSofBC SOS Program is currently going through a similar process of reflecting and planning for increased influx at the team level to look critically at our service offerings and see how we can introduce changes to help us serve larger number of clients while keeping staff workload manageable. Hence this planning and individual agency reflection is very important for each agency to think how an upsurge will impact on staff and services; together with the synergy MAP is suggesting of working together to address our needs sectorally.

MUNI: plan needs to reflect the seasonal needs – e.g., housing in summer or winter are very different.

- **Discussion on HWG's Participation in the CCR Housing Working Group - Doug**

- a) CCR seems very nationally focussed – but the issue needs to include all levels of government. And how can we coordinate our activities to support CCR strategies regardless of claimant status?
- b) How do we engage back and forth so info comes back to MAP and we can send to CCR?
- c) Who should we be sending to the CCR Housing WG?

MAP: suggested 2 members to represent MAP BC HWG at CCR.

HWG Co-chair asked who at HWG attends CCR Housing WG: Jenny M, Mohammed, Ryan, Doug
can we nominate 2 of these attendees?

Jenny M nominated Mohammed (seconded by Doug)

MAP suggested the other nominee be a HWG co-chair.

Mohammed and **Doug** agreed to the nomination, Doug asked **Derek** to be co-chair backup at CCR if needed. Agreed.

MAP to ask CCR how Housing group set up will be and to pass along the nominations.

Agency (Housing Related) Updates

Dustin (HSABC)

Series of events that HSABC will be hosting over the next few months may be of interest to some of you:

<https://hsa-bc.ca/LearnConnect.html>

Mahi (SOS-ISSofBC) continue to see few new clients needing short term housing – helping more clients who need permanent housing, or need to move.

Launching in early March a housing survey – to find out how people find housing OUTSIDE OF MAP AGENCIES
Going back to clients who approached SOS since 2018 to ask about their housing search experience – who helped? What kind of housing did they find?

Administered by SOS staff in first language.

The survey has been shared with HWG co-chairs for their feedback about questions.

Questions

Moe – claimants may have changed their numbers / emails – can you call them? Or can you provide an honorarium to make sure these 3 years are well represented.

Mahi – no honorarium. Depending on staff to call – some may have fallen through the cracks.

Tammy – sounds like an interesting project – will you release to public/MAP?

Mahi – yes will be on the BC Refugee Hub website

Ryan very interested in knowing where do many claimants go?

James (JHC) – 2 housing openings by March 1ST

Ryan (Kinbrace) has space for families and individuals – very few referrals recently.

Richard – has a room available for a single woman.

Listen in to his podcast [Along the Way](#) which features Saleem Spindari.

Adjourned at 2:15 - Next meeting: Thursday March 25, 2021