

MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday May 26, 2021 - 1:15 – 2:45 pm online

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- **PRESENT:** Doug Peat, Barry Growe (Journey Home Community), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Ann Ball (New Hope), Liam McQuillan (MOSAIC), Julia Wu (bc211), Nicole Stinson (BC Housing), Jenny Lam (Options) Jenny Moss (MAP)
Regrets: Joni Rose (MUNI), Mohsen Eslami (SOS-ISSofBC)
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Chair: Doug Peat (JHC) in Marzieh's absence

Welcome, and land acknowledgement from the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations.

Thanks to our funders the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, BC

- The Minutes of the April 28 Meeting were approved
- The Agenda for this meeting was reviewed and approved.

Agency updates

- **Agency updates - all**

Ann (New Hope) – housing is full, no updates, lots of activity as usual

Julia (BC211) – holding steady – noticed some more calls from claimants.

211 along with United Way are engaged in providing a welcome to Ukrainian arrivals, but this is also very slow – not sure if a spike will come later.

Ukrainians will go into hotel spaces when they arrive – so not putting strain on local housing resources on arrival, but they will compete for other services as there is an overlap.

They will access short term services provided and may transition to being claimants if they are looking for longer support as there is no income assistance for Ukrainians.

Kelly (Inasmuch) – new baby girl born!

New staff positions that need to be filled, so working on that.

Couple of families moving out soon but won't take on more residents until staffing is settled.

17 people in their care right now

Derek (Kinbrace) – full. Hired a new housing support worker – starts next week as Mohammed goes on to their new Employment program.

Working with consultants to design a new building custom made for refugee claimants.

Useful experience to hear from former residents as to what would the ideal space be for them in relation to

Kinbrace's values and the relationship to a welcoming community.

Goals is to open doors in 7/8 years.

- **Referral/vacancy statistics report – Jenny Moss**

Housing Providers: zero vacancies at all 4 transition houses.

Referrals – no information received from SOS or MOSAIC this month due to illness/absence.

BC211 statistics for May:

20 contacts specifically tagged as refugee claimants

(includes calls from claimants and calls from service providers about claimants)

69 total contacts regarding refugees

41 calls were around housing

11 calls were around financial assistance

Other reasons for call included settlement support, assistance with applications, food/basic needs, other services like employment or language classes

- Anecdotally Julia has heard of more large families arriving – she mentioned Afghans specifically.
- Referring Jenny to Red Cross for data. The CRC Emergency Housing scheme supports highly vulnerable claimants (but no assistance for single males).

Jenny Moss thanked Julia and noted how important this data is as it intersects with the Emergency Plan

(Continuing Agency Updates)

Jenny Lam (Options) Quite a few Spanish speaking claimants arriving at Options, and they mostly need housing. We provide emergency housing in a hotel, but it is challenging to find something longer.

(4 Ukrainians went to Options for assistance – heard there are 65 settled so far in Surrey)

Barry (ETF) – we are hearing of many refugee claimants who approach one of our agencies / get sent to shelters / try to sort something out themselves and eventually come back again, in a ping pong fashion.

Because of this situation, the MAP Emergency Task Force has decided to create a proposal to request funding to address this gap. Barry was informed that data and trends would help provide a strong rationale for this ask and Jenny & Barry are working on finalizing this and should send it in to the government next week.

Doug: IRCC statistics have been revised – down some but still over normal.

Update and discussions BC CHARMS – Liam McQuillan

Launch of BC CHARMS was held on May 16 – 20+ agencies in attendance plus MAP Executive and our funders.

3-hour presentation on CHARMS database, sub projects and functionality and potential of CHARMS.

The launch was featured in an article of their LinkedIn page with photos from the event.

- Brochures were featured with info on the service plus the navigation website.
- Promotional video demonstrated to.

Some answers to questions raised recently:

- There are 3 roles in BC CHARMS:
Liaison – person at agency monitoring the users and helping with issues.
Users who are housing providers or settlement workers
All issues can also be run through Liam as first contact, Florance and Marzieh also.
- 60 licences purchased – each agency will get 1 user licence unless that agency is offering both housing AND settlement services. We will start with our familiar agencies first.
- **Training sessions** – taking place in June
Updated schedule will go out: ideally twice a week in person and virtual on Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Watch for notification!
It is possible to do an in-person training onsite as a group – for example in Surrey where 2/3 agencies could attend together.
- **Signing:** Who signs where?
A manager must sign on Schedule A, as well as the user.
- There will be an update on privacy and policy concerns following some questions:
Privacy is a very important matter – Licenses or ID's are one per person – they cannot be shared between settlement workers. This will help with audits and tracking who is using the software account.
Do not share ID's - protect privacy of clients and the sector by having individual accounts.
- **Phasing in** – starting with our agencies we will then enter -
Phase 2: Landlord BC
Phase 3 – incorporate private landlords via agencies they have a relationship with
Phase 4 – self-referrals to BC CHARMS – for refugee claimants themselves and 3rd parties like schools/lawyers/CBSA/community groups – they will use the external community link.
Everyone will be informed when someone joins the system or when a vacancy is available.

Please keep up with information about future training sessions, and with social media posts and info from BC CHARMS on YouTube and LinkedIn @bccharms

Contact Liam at lmquillan@mosaicbc.org

- **Provincial Housing Strategy for Resettled Refugees and Refugee Claimants**

The Minutes of the meeting were updated following Doug's request to strengthen what was discussed around Refugee Claimants. Elements such as:

Challenges faced by refugee claimants – homelessness, barriers to employment, pressure on shelters, lack of income support, as well as the issues shared by all types of refugees.

There was a discussion around what MAP HWG would like to see presented through this channel. Notes were changed – Doug pointed out the changes that were made to be more reflective of refugee claimants.

****Derek (Kinbrace)** Some agencies did not know that MSDPR can provide a 'housing set up fund' – contact MSDPR for help. When claimants move out, they all apply to welfare for financial assistance to get furnishings etc.: need to send tenancy agreement/rent to be paid; you should ask for security deposit, transfer of the rent amount, and housing set up fund.

Doug made suggestions to the Provincial Strategy plan for refugee housing.

Jenny read out the **Recommendations:**

- Participation in BCNPHA's Strategic Projects Advisory Committee: BCNPHA has two major strategic projects being launched in 2024: the Canadian Rental Housing Index update (Early 2023), and the Affordable Housing Plan for BC Update (September 2024 to align with the BC provincial election in October 2024). The role of the Strategic Projects Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and input into the development of BCNPHA's strategic research and advocacy projects. We are recommending that a representative from the settlement sector be involved in this Strategic Projects Advisory Committee.
- Partnership Opportunities: Work to Identify and explore partnership opportunities between the housing and settlement sectors to address urgent, critical need through immediate solutions.
- PRHS Strategy Release: Align with the BC Provincial Election in October 2024. BCNPHA's Affordable Housing Plan for BC update will incorporate the refugee strategy and/or timed for release simultaneously providing an opportunity to leverage BCNPHA campaign resources and to raise the profile of the PRHS as a provincial election issue.

NEXT STEPS

- Gather feedback from sector representatives on the proposed recommendations
- Invite settlement sector representative to sit on BCNPHA's Strategic Projects Advisory Committee
- Secure funding for the development of the plan
- Development of a detailed timeline and workplan for the project

Please read this and email feedback to Doug (cc Jenny) to raise profile for refugee claimants' priorities in housing provincially.

- **Discussion around recent announcement concerning transfer of funds to BC Housing.**

How can we speak into the structuring of these funds?

Doug asked Nicole (BC Housing) if she had any information she could share about plans for this funding?

Nicole: As a Crown they wait to hear direction from the Province.

They are still waiting to hear from the Province – needs mandate and the funds are still with the Ministry of Attorney General.

Nicole endorsed the idea of sending a letter to Hon David Eby and copying Shane Ramsey CEO at BC Housing

Send a letter with recommendations and research (based on our reports)

Do not delay – there are fewer meetings over summer so June would be ideal for a letter.

Process:

Doug requested agencies to provide what they have identified as vital for their future plans – expanded housing and capital needs.

Backed up by info from our research from 2019 and present statistics.

Derek: were these not included in the letters to MUNI earlier?

Doug: Yes, we could re-use some of this content, but people's plans change so there might be new information.

Called on agencies to send to Jenny and Doug/Marzieh **in one week (June 2)**

Doug to draft, Jenny to edit with back up from HWG.

Agencies will not be identified in the letter.

Nicole – growing partnership with BCNPHA is a strong partner on this so useful to mention them too.

Jenny Moss thanked government representatives for the re-thinking of the use of IHAP funds and mentioned that the subject of the inequities for different streams of newcomers came up very strongly, and a meeting with AMSSA May 30 is coming out of this. Will report back.

Doug mentioned that **Standing Committee on Immigration** passed a resolution demanding equal treatment for those coming from war-torn countries, specifically the Afghan resettled refugees. We had alluded to this in our letters to government.

- **Summary on MAP BC Structure Conversations – Brad Kinnie**
Potential impact on MAP BC HWG

Brad (Journey Home) repeated need for this discussion about difficulty in finding a replacement for Jenny Lam as MAP Co-chair.

Loren (Kinbrace) and Brad thought it wise to look at the issue and it came out that the main issues from feedback were:

- a) Decision making responsibility on behalf of MAP is too demanding for the co-chairs
- b) Complexity of leadership in relation to all MAP's projects
- c) Time needed to manage all these responsibilities.

The co-chairs are volunteers and are providing volunteer help which is getting out of proportion.

AT MAP BC Meeting (May 2022) we agreed to the setting up of:

- Advisory Cttee to meet once a month to divide decision making – job descriptions will be provided.
- 2 co-chair positions should be continued, but new pared down job description needed which will be simpler.
- Decision making matrix to clarify all decision making at MAP will be applied. Who else can assist?
- Establish a shared decision-making model for each project that could help with ongoing projects (BC CHARMS / MAP BCIHC Support Program / Emergency Task Force / Public Education. Possibly from existing Advisory Committees or Volunteer groups.
- \$10,000 (leftover MAP funds from previous years) to be used for a consultant to continue ETF work that is urgent right now. This would add to MAP's immediate capacity and relieve the MAP Executive.
- Because funding comes to an end in March 2023 it would be appropriate in the Fall to embark on strategic planning to:
 - review funding
 - establish updated TOR
 - and create MAP strategic decisions.

DISCUSSION

Doug commented that the co-chair positions at the working group level are very busy too.

Jenny Lam – yes, it is lots of work – but it is very positive that we have got more people involved.

The Advisory Groups will be of tremendous help and spread the responsibilities. It will divide and diversify the workload. However, it is essential we maintain a clear and simple reporting mechanism for the MAP Coordinator.

Jenny Moss: Membership fees may become a possibility if it is difficult to create more shared responsibility.

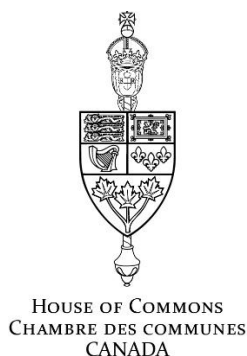
Doug shared a video: Concert Properties and Journey Homes story.

Doug mentioned his appreciation to all for their participation and commitment to refugee claimant housing.

Next meeting: June 23, hosted by Doug as Jenny will be away

Meeting adjourned: 2:35 pm

Standing Committee
on Citizenship and
Immigration



Comité permanent
de la citoyenneté et
de l'immigration

For immediate release

NEWS RELEASE

Extending special immigration measures to regions faced with humanitarian crises

Ottawa, April 06, 2022 -

Canada is recognized for its historical leadership in humanitarian actions in the global community and we must also play our part now. Canadians stand in support of Ukrainians in the face of the devastating and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

During the Standing Committee for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's (CIMM) study of differential outcomes in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada decisions, while many of the witnesses noted their support for the special immigration measures to Ukraine nationals and want to see the government do everything it can to help those in need get to safety expeditiously; however, they also pointed out that they see a distinct difference in how people in different regions faced with an urgent humanitarian crisis are being treated. They are calling on the government to provide the same treatment and special immigration measures to the people of Ukraine to those regions.

As such, on April 5, 2022, the Standing Committee on Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees passed the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration issue a press release calling on the Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship to: a) extend the special immigration measures afforded to Ukrainian nationals to other regions faced with a humanitarian crisis such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Rohingya and Hong Kong, including the expansion of biometrics collection capabilities in neighbouring countries and the issuance Temporary Resident Permits and single journey travel documents to those without a passport; b) allow displaced persons in third countries, such as Afghans and other refugees in Ukrainian refugee camps, to seek refuge in Canada; c) waive the UNHCR refugee determination; and d) make available these measures to Afghans in Afghanistan.

Given that time is of the essence, and many people are in need of assistance, such as Afghans fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Committee calls on the Minister of Immigration to immediately act on the measures noted in the motion to ensure that Canada's response to ongoing humanitarian crises in different regions are treated with the same vigor as Ukraine.

For more information, please contact:

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