

A6 - Housing For All: Different Approaches In Different Places

Presentation #1 title: Communities in Transition - A Municipal Response to Homelessness

Presenters:

Noha Sedky - CitySpaces Consulting

Bruce Anderson - City of Nanaimo

Abstract

Many BC municipalities have faced a situation of increasing homelessness and are starting to get more directly involved in responses to homelessness. Traditionally, municipalities were reluctant to take on initiatives in this area, associating both the causes and solutions of homelessness to other levels of government. This has changed in recent years with a growing number of municipalities participating, if not spearheading local initiatives and strategies to address homelessness. This session will focus on what municipalities can do (and have been doing) to prevent and reduce homelessness locally. It will equally consider how community investment in neighbourhood centres and downtowns can act as a catalyst for addressing homelessness issues. This issue is of particular relevance in the pre-Olympic era when pressures on the rental stock and urban revitalization are seen to potentially displace the more vulnerable members of our society. A series of tools and examples will be presented that highlight municipalities' leadership and coordination role and some of the barriers and opportunities of implementation. This will include: - political leadership and securing resources; - coordination and partnership between major stakeholders; - site identification and acquisition; - neighbourhood impacts and community engagement; - safety and security concerns; streamlining regulation and problem solving; piloting new programs and initiatives; and monitoring outcomes and efforts. Overall, the session will demonstrate the importance of locally-driven solutions and prioritized action plans for communities in transition. Noha Sedky, Planning Consultant with CitySpaces Consulting, will introduce the session and discuss the important leadership and coordination role of municipalities. She will present a set of tools and examples from communities throughout Western Canada. In particular, she will describe the experience of working with the City of Nanaimo in developing a Housing First and Harm Reduction Action Plan and how the Plan is anticipated to respond to the homelessness situation in Nanaimo. Bruce Anderson, Manager of Community Planning from the City of Nanaimo, will present an overview of that community's response to homelessness. He will outline the challenges and opportunities related to developing and implementing the Action Plan, specifically the real challenges related to land development, integration of services, community opposition, political support and partnerships. Following the presentations, the format is planned to allow sufficient time for discussion and ideas-sharing with participants.

Speaker Biography

Noha Sedky is a planning consultant with CitySpaces Consulting, one of Western Canada's largest independent planning firms. Noha's specialization is in policy and program development, strategic planning and research in the areas of housing and homelessness. She has been working to assist municipalities and agencies with the development of housing policy reviews, affordable housing initiatives and the evaluation of homelessness projects. Recently, she helped to develop BC's Emergency Shelter Program standards and guidelines; evaluated homeless outreach pilot projects across BC; developed affordable housing strategies in Squamish, Coquitlam and New Westminster; and participated in the development of Nanaimo's Action Plan on homelessness.

Bruce Anderson, MA, MCIP - Bruce Anderson is the Manager of Community Planning with the City of Nanaimo, where he has responsibility for policies and programs directed toward achieving the vision of the Official Community Plan. In this role he has managed the City's preparation and delivery of an Action Plan to address homelessness in Nanaimo. Prior to joining Nanaimo in 2006, he was Manager of Development Services for the Town of Ladysmith, where for a decade he played a key role in the vision and project implementation of transforming Ladysmith into an award-winning seaside community. Bruce has also engaged in international planning work through FCM as a volunteer and consultant in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Prior to coming to Vancouver Island, Bruce was a private sector consultant providing planning and development services to a range of clients in southern Ontario and BC.

Presentation title: Private Sector Contributions to Housing Homeless

Presentation # 2 title: Private Sector Contributions to Housing Homeless

Presenters:

Jim Bennett - Victoria Real Estate Board and Chair, Capital Regional District Housing Action Team
Tony Joe - Victoria Real Estate Board

Abstract

How the Victoria Real Estate Board helped the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness find over 100 housing units in 16 months. Many communities that are successfully meeting the challenges of housing their homeless populations attest to the value of having private sector participation, including local REALTORS®, in finding homegrown solutions. Speaking at the BC Land Summit at Whistler, B.C. on May 21, Tony Joe, Past President of the Victoria Real Estate Board (VREB), will outline how the VREB and its members have played a vital role in helping both the Capital Regional District and the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness find and deliver over 100 housing opportunities over a 16 month period for local homeless individuals. Mr. Joe will address how the VREB first got involved with the community team taking the lead on finding both housing and health services for the target populations and subsequently participated in turning the initial goals into realities. 'Our participation in this area reflects our Board's commitment to a set of 'Quality of Life' principles that we adopted in 2005 to guide our community involvement,' said Joe. 'The second of these principles calls for support for housing opportunities for all. Mr. Joe will explain to his Whistler audience that being successful in the search for non-market housing for the homeless first required a commitment to be involved by the VREB's Directors. 'Once the decision was made to help, we then built positive relationships with others who share the same goals,' said Joe. 'Finally it took thinking outside the box and having a good understanding of what type of properties can be used locally to provide the housing that often leads to recovery and life improvement for those in need,' he added. Joe noted that the real estate profession is on the front lines of knowing when properties become available and REALTORS® are accordingly often in the best position to help others locate solutions for housing needs outside of the regular market.

Speaker Biography

Tony Joe Speaker Bio A born and raised Victorian, Tony has been a licensed Realtor since 1991. His highly productive team, Tony Joe & Associates, have garnered the highest production awards both locally and also globally with RE/MAX International having served hundreds upon hundreds of home buyers and sellers. While President of the Victoria Real Estate Board in 2008, one of his mandates was the development and creation of 'The Green Task Force', charged with researching and devising plans relating to energy efficiency and environmental stewardship which ultimately benefits consumers and the clients all Realtors serve. He is also a recognized community leader in meeting the challenge of housing homeless in Greater Victoria. Early on in his volunteering, he served a short stint with the Youth Employment Project where he learned in depth about the homeless problem facing the downtown core area of the region. Realizing that homeless affects an entire community and that Realtors sell communities, his affiliation with the Victoria Real Estate Board has been allowed him to make a significant contribution to this growing issue. Tony is a member of the Knights of Columbus, Rotary International, Victoria Chinese Commerce Association and the Values Based Business Network. He has volunteered on the Youth Employment Project, 150 Years in Golden Mountain, the Victoria Dragonboat Festival and regularly volunteers at his local Blood Clinic. In his free time, Tony enjoys golf, travel, writing and performing Improv comedy.

Jim Bennett is entering his fifth year as the Government Relations Coordinator at the Victoria Real Estate Board. Prior to joining the board staff, he served as a cabinet appointee in the government of Premier Bill Bennett and later joined the public service as a senior communications officer for the Ministry of Advanced Education. In the Greater Victoria community, Jim serves as Chair of the Capital Regional District's Housing Action Team, as a member of the United Way's Impact Council on Housing, and as a member of the Community Social Planning Council.