To: Mayor and Members of Council  

Subject: Reduced Parking Requirements for Affordable Housing and Various Planning Fees  

Recommendation:  

“THAT all Planning Fees related to applications for minor variances to consider reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing be reimbursed upon the applicant entering into an agreement with the City of Belleville confirming that the dwelling units will be rented at or below market rate as established by the County of Hastings for a period of five years; and,  

THAT the reimbursement of all Planning Fees related to applications for minor variances to consider reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing be in effect until the Affordable Rental Housing CIP is approved and implemented.”  

Strategic Plan Alignment:  

The City of Belleville’s Strategic Plan identifies nine strategic themes. The recommendation within this report aligns with all nine strategic themes and objectives: Infrastructure; Industrial and Commercial Development; Residential Development; Transportation and Mobility; City Centre Revitalization; Culture and Recreation; Tourism and Waterfront Revitalization; Community Health, Safety and Security; and Environment.
Background:

At the Belleville Housing Summit which was held on March 18 and 19 of 2019, Council passed a number of Resolutions and amendments relating to the provision of affordable rental housing. Staff has been working on these resolutions and the status of the seven overall resolutions/action items is included as Attachment #1. The most notable change to this new update is that the requirement for developing a Terms of Reference for the CIP has been completed and awarded to Dillon Consulting with a Public Information Centre scheduled for December 11, 2019 from 4:30 to 6:30 at Belleville City Hall.

One of the items that was discussed during the Housing Summit has been the opportunity for reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing. This discussion has included the following:

- Does affordable rental housing require the same level of parking as market housing?
- Does the requirement of the existing parking standards in the City’s zoning by-laws cause additional expense to development of affordable rental housing and therefore detracts from the fiscal viability of these projects?
- Under what circumstances should reduced parking standards for affordable rental housing be considered (e.g. proximity to public transit)?
- What are examples illustrating the effectiveness of reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing in Belleville and other municipalities?
- How does the City effectively implement reduced parking requirements for affordable housing?

Because the issue of addressing the appropriate level of parking requirements for affordable rental housing is such an important issue, this is being brought forward in advance of the Official Plan Update, Zoning By-law Review and Affordable Housing CIP.

The requirement for parking requires additional land and/or underground facilities which increases the cost of developing housing. Addressing parking is an important consideration. If there is inadequate onsite parking then vehicles will be required to park offsite using public right-of-ways. Assessing the proposed use and ensuring the larger public interest is maintained is an important consideration. Balancing competing public interests is sometimes challenging. While ensuring adequate onsite parking is important, consideration towards incentivizing the construction of affordable rental housing must also be determined.

Canada Mortgage and Housing have identified that parking can be a barrier to the development of affordable housing and work with developers and municipalities on a case-by-case basis to provide best practices that illustrate affordable rental housing can function with reduced parking requirements and lowers the overall development costs resulting in successfully executed projects.
For a sustained and consistent approach to this requirement, Staff is working with Dillon Consulting to prepare an Affordable Rental Housing Reduced Parking Guide which can be utilized for property owners, developers, housing providers, staff, and Committee of Adjustment members which will establish reduced parking standards for affordable rental housing. This will include identifying when reduced standards should be considered and providing examples illustrating the effectiveness of reduced parking requirements for incentivizing affordable rental housing.

As the City is currently undertaking a Zoning By-law Review and Affordable Rental Housing CIP, these reduced parking requirements will be implemented through these documents with the goal of providing affordable rental housing.

Until these documents are finalized, all requests for reduced parking requirements will be through an application for minor variance. To facilitate this process, Staff is recommending that all Planning Fees related to applications for minor variances to consider reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing be reimbursed upon the applicant entering into an agreement with the City of Belleville confirming that the dwelling units will be rented at or below market rate as established by the County of Hastings for a period of five years.

All minor variance applications for reduced parking will be evaluated based upon the criterion established through the Affordable Rental Housing Reduced Parking Guide which is currently being developed to assist Staff and Committee of Adjustment members in their considerations of such applications. Planning Staff will provide full recommendations to the Committee of Adjustment on all minor variance applications for reduced parking based upon the Affordable Rental Housing Reduced Parking Guide.

**Financial/Analysis:**

The work that is being undertaken for the Affordable Rental Housing Reduced Parking Guide will be paid through the 2019 approved operating budget of the Policy Section.

Additionally, fees for minor variances applications are $750.00 so it would be reasonable to accept up to 3 applications for this process until the Affordable Housing CIP is in place resulting in a loss of revenue of $2250.00.
Conclusion:

That Council approves the reimbursement of Fees related to reduced parking requirements for affordable rental housing as recommended by management.

Respectfully submitted

____________________________
Stephen Ashton, MCIP, RPP, CAHP
Manager, Policy Planning
Engineering and Development Services Department

attachment: Status of Council Resolutions from Belleville Housing Summit
November 18, 2019

Attention: Rod Bovay, CAO

From: Stephen Ashton, Director of Engineering and Development Services

Re: Further Update on Status of Housing Summit Resolutions

At the Belleville Housing Summit which was held on March 18 and 19 of 2019, Council passed a number of Resolutions and amendments. Planning Staff have consolidated these motions which result in 7 overall resolutions that could also be described as ‘action items’. The seven resolutions are individually numbered and the staff update on each item is included within a box after each resolution.

This is a further update to the August 9, 2019 memo regarding the status of these resolutions

1. THAT Council direct staff to develop a Terms of Reference for the undertaking of a housing community improvement plan that will provide incentives for affordable rental units in addition to leveraging the opportunities of the existing Brownfields Community Improvement Plan and Downtown Community Improvement Plan.

**COMPLETED**

The Affordable Rental Housing CIP project has been awarded to Dillon Consulting. There will be an initial Public Information Centre on Wednesday December 11, 2019. This PIC will address both the Affordable Rental Housing CIP and the Zoning By-law Update. In addition to this PIC, there will be stakeholder interviews during the day.

This Affordable Rental Housing CIP will also leverage the opportunities of the existing Brownfields Community Improvement Plan and Downtown Community Improvement Plan. To achieve this leveraging of plans, both the Brownfields CIP and Downtown CIP are also being updated in conjunction with the development of the Affordable Housing CIP.

This project is expected to be completed in early 2020 to allow Council to consider budget approval for prioritized incentives.

2. THAT Council direct staff to review the information from the 2019 Housing Summit and report back to Council with recommendations on next steps including the requirement for a housing strategy for affordable and attainable housing that will leverage the opportunities advanced during this event; and

THAT a Housing Strategy includes the goal of having approval of one thousand (1,000) rental units by 2025; and,
THAT staff prepare a report for Council’s consideration that includes policies allowing for the doubling of the City’s current yearly housing production from 200 units by 2025; and,

THAT affordable and attainable housing will be prioritized and fast-tracked to achieve the 1,000 unit target.

This resolution, as amended by Council includes a number of items as follows:

- Staff will report back on ‘next steps’ after Items 1 and 3 to 6 are completed. In terms of a housing strategy, Staff has had discussions with County of Hastings Staff who are currently undertaking a five-year update of the County’s Ten-Year Plan to address Housing and Homelessness Issues. City Staff will be scheduling a formal meeting and the intention will be to review the County’s Plan and identify areas where additional information is required at the City of Belleville (local level).
- During pre-consultation meetings with developers since the housing summit, City Staff have explained Council’s prioritization of having apartment rental units built in Belleville and that larger development plans should contain a mix of housing types. Developers have been receptive to Council’s prioritization and have been updating their development applications to include apartment blocks.
- The Housing Report for future development will include an appendix to identify approved and proposed rental units. This Housing Report will be prepared and published in early January, 2020. In addition, this Housing Report will also be updated semi-annually to provide for ongoing tracking of Council’s Resolution.
- Building, Planning, and Engineering have all recognized the importance of fast-tracking approvals of affordable housing projects as a community benefit and are prioritizing these developments.

3. THAT, as a short-term measure before a housing community improvement plan is developed and approved by the City and Province, the Development Charges By-law be updated for the purpose of reducing Development Charges by 50% (excluding areas inside the Central Business District which already receive this benefit) for all apartment units being built that enter into an agreement with the City to charge rents at market rate or less for a defined period of time. Market rates will be established by the County of Hastings; and,

THAT the City provide for a reduction in Development Charges for properties with a minimum of a six (6) unit apartment building to a maximum of 1,000 units by 2025.

COMPLETED
(Council approved the undertaking of an addendum to the Development Charge Update and the required by-laws were approved.)

4. THAT Council direct staff to expand the Terms of Reference for the current Official Plan update to include modernizing housing policies, intensification policies and mixed use policies in order to increase the supply of lands available for medium and high density residential development along with mixed use development (ground floor commercial with residential above) which will ultimately increase the supply of rental units in the City of Belleville.

COMPLETED
(It is expected that Dillon Consulting, who is preparing the new Official Plan Policies will have the document completed in mid to late September and submitted to the City and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs as part of their one-window review process.)

5. THAT these recommendations be referred to the 2019 budget process.

COMPLETED
(Council approved budget for the undertaking of a Housing CIP).
6. THAT Management prepare a policy for Council’s consideration providing for an annual property allotment from the City to Habitat for Humanity and like Organizations in the City of Belleville of four (4) to six (6) properties for their use/purposes.

Discussions and Strategies will have to be developed through the City Departments including Clerks and Development and Engineering. There may also be a requirement to include this through the City’s Housing CIP Study.

7. THAT staff bring back an updated policy on Secondary Units to allow for the process to bring illegal units to legal units and then to look at ways to encourage new secondary units that could include loans or grants.

City Staff from Planning, Building and Fire & Emergency Services have met to establish a process of how an individual property owner can apply to legalize an illegal second unit. This process has also been included on the City’s Second Unit Policy webpage which includes a guide titled “Second Dwelling Units Building Code Basics” and a link to the City’s Geographical Information System (GIS) which provides a map and listing of all properties with legal second units.

In terms of encouraging new secondary units that include loans or grants: this would be part of the Housing CIP which would also consist of a financial analysis by Watson and Associates.

It should also be identified and recognized that Council approved/confirmed through the update to the City’s Development Charge By-law, that development of second units (including additions and coach houses) are exempt from development charges.

The Affordable Rental Housing CIP will examine if there are any opportunities to provide incentives to update/recognize illegal units so they become legal units and then to look at ways to encourage new secondary units that could include loans or grants. Once this occurs Council will provide consideration into providing this type of incentive as part of the 2020 Operating Budget. At this point in time, staff develop a policy to address illegal units and encouraging new units.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Ashton, MCIP, RPP, CAHP
Manager, Policy Planning
Engineering and Development Services Department