

Staff Report to Council

Title: Community Housing Project

Report Number: Economic Development 2024-03

Director: Chief Administrative Officer

Manager: Strategic Initiatives

Meeting Date:

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Date to be considered by Council:

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Recommendation:

That Council receive the report from Flourish outlining potential development concepts on municipal and private lands to expand affordable and supportive housing options for information purposes.

Executive Summary:

In early 2024, a group of community housing stakeholders including representatives from Bruce County Housing, Women's House, Community Living, Russell Meadows (existing not-for-profit housing provider), and municipal staff began meeting monthly to collaborate and advance discussions to expand affordable and supportive housing options in the Municipality. Flourish, a consulting firm affiliated with Indwell that has extensive experience developing affordable and supportive housing across Ontario, was hired to develop an initial development concept plan exploring the potential of new affordable or supportive housing on both municipal and privately owned property. The Flourish report includes a review of several municipal properties and includes initial development concepts and preliminary financial pro forma for 705 Princes Street and a private property in Kincardine, as well as information on potential capital funding sources.

Strategic Priorities:

C.12-Support community wellness in the Municipality of Kincardine

B.7-Ensure municipal facilities and owned lands make the best use of each asset

Financial Considerations:

Council directed staff to utilize \$15,000 from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to cover the costs for Flourish consulting to develop an initial development concept and preliminary financial outline. If Council wishes to pursue an initial development concept, additional municipal supports and staff time will be required.

Policy:

Nil.

Context and Background Information:

Under provincial housing services legislation, Bruce County is identified as the Housing Service System Manager responsible for addressing housing and homelessness issues from a public sector perspective. The Municipality of Kincardine has had limited involvement in affordable or supportive housing historically. In order to address the complex housing challenges we face today, it's acknowledged that multiple layers of government, private and public sector organizations, developers, non-profit organizations and the community will need to work together to address the challenges.

The Municipality developed a Housing Action Plan in 2022 to identify actions the municipality could pursue to improve housing, which includes the following actions:

2.3 Conduct a review of all municipal, provincial and federally owned lands and assets in the Municipality that may be deemed surplus or underutilized and could potentially site future affordable housing projects.

3.5 Continue to explore partnerships with community groups, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and/or private developers to create more affordable and attainable housing.

Following the creation of the Housing Action Plan, municipal staff continued to meet with local organizations involved in supportive and affordable housing to discuss opportunities to support or advance new housing initiatives. There was strong interest in collaborating with the various partners currently involved in housing to bring a new housing project to fruition.

Initial group meetings were productive but there was a strong desire to bring in experts with experience in community housing projects to advance discussions and develop an initial concept plan and outline funding sources. Flourish was hired to provide expertise and guidance on early planning work, project scopes, financing models, granting opportunities.

Consultation Overview:

Flourish consulted with staff from the Women's House, Community Living, Bruce County, Russell Meadows, municipal staff and a private landowner in creating the initial development concept plan. The stakeholders involved prefer the size and scale of the concept plan for 705 Princes St. (former W.E. Thompson school site) and preferred the location with its proximity to downtown and community amenities. The group recognizes the substantial amount of funding required to initiate a project of this scale but are confident that the strong

partnerships development will be enticing to various levels of government in submitting funding requests.

Bruce Power currently leases the Princes St. property from the Municipality for their Training Centre and this lease is due for renewal in January 2025. Municipal staff had early discussions with Bruce Power about the potential development concept for a portion of the underutilized parking lot to support future housing.

The community hasn't been engaged on the project at this point but there was strong support for affordable and attainable housing during community engagement for the Housing Action Plan.

Origin:

Housing Action Plan

May 15, 2023, Council Resolution – THAT staff be directed to work with Bruce County staff to review the lands identified by the Municipality of Kincardine staff as potential lands for development to support affordable and attainable housing goals and bring back a report on consideration for next steps.

Implementation Considerations:

The Flourish report suggests the potential for municipal or county ownership of lands but staff have been clear that the Municipality does not have capacity or expertise to act as a housing manager, nor do we have the financial means to purchase private property to support housing. There are other organizations that are willing to own and operate a new housing project.

A potential municipal contribution to support affordable or supportive housing would be through the sale or donation of underutilized municipal lands. Council is considering a separate report on surplus municipal lands at the October 23rd meeting and will be asked to provide direction on next steps.

Should Council wish to proceed with a potential project on the Princes St. property parking lot, a severance of the lands should be considered, followed by a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Expression of Interest (EOI) for the surplus municipal lands to support affordable housing. It is not the intent of the staff that the Municipality would own or operate the housing facility.

The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) includes a Surplus Land Program with provisions that could allow the Municipality to dispose of surplus lands at a reduced costs or at no cost.

Risk Analysis:

The Municipality is not mandated as a Housing Service Manager and does not have the capacity or expertise to act as a housing manager.

NIMBY (not in my back yard) can be prevalent with proposed affordable and supportive housing projects.

Attachments: Flourish report

Prepared by: Cherie Leslie, Community Economic Development Coordinator

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