

**Kingston Model for Affordable Housing Development**  
**Community Needs Workshop**  
**Sept 9, 2004 Workshop Notes**

**Q&A session after presentations**

- Look into the trickle up or trickle down process, ie. filtering , make it affordable for more to buy homes, move people out of rental and free up more rents to make more affordable.
- Reduce red tape for building, renovations, and property standards.
- Consider rooming houses.
- Increase rent supplement cap on the provincial level.
- Municipalities to form a partnership with the province.
- Municipalities must group together and take aggressive stand to get province to accept it has a partnership role.
- Help managing utilities payments.
- Desperate need to increase shelter allowance.
- It is important that we stay connected as a community or we will defeat ourselves before we begin. Keep those connections to make a big impact. Advocacy means we are a united front.
- Look at existing emergency system and to look at something proactive.

**Feedback from Greg Grange's Focus Group**

**Question 1**

- No more assessing information. Time for action.
- We all have special needs/each group. It is important that we articulate which is the weakest link. We can't solve all problems.
- Improve existing housing stock. This will reduce utility costs and energy consumption. Building of new stock but improving the existing as well which would help address utilities. Cost efficiency. Capital improvements.
- We cannot make such statements as, "we are at the whim of the province and that is why the delays." Together municipalities are strong. The province couldn't exist without us. We have to let them know. It has to be done in a positive way.
- Building regulations are provincial. Need less red tape.
- Need an aggressive education program to educate the tenant. This will aid to preserve tenants. They need to know they have an obligation to pay rent, utilities, and obligations under the SHRA. Hire workers to review those obligations, to include financial management and life skills.
- Education at a number of different levels and work with landlords. Be creative with our community resources, ie. retirees that have wealth of information to teach skills.
- Use the Habitat for Humanity as a model. It could be broadened to a larger part of the community. A preparation for future home ownership.
- Abbeyfield House is testing further ways and means in Kingston to securing land, financing homes and renovations. There are no breaks for our type of organization. There are some tax situations to use. We face huge barriers. We

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live in community which has fundraisers within themselves. We compete against the municipalities.

- In regard to land banking issue: down the road make sure a process in place that the people living there would help plan the neighbourhood. Don't build another suburb.

Question 2 - feedback

- We need a listing of properties that could be land banked.
- In regard to people with mental disorders. Have agencies take on rent liability for clients. Could rent bank be involved in that?
- Look at using rent bank to help a tenant losing a roommate be able to stay in the unit until another tenant could be found.
- Practical change on building code and bylaws.
- Mentoring with big brothers.
- Formalize the partnership between student and seniors.
- Parenting program to keep teenagers at home.
- Youth integration into the community.
- There was a youth and homeless program to keep youth out of the justice system and in homes. Some teenagers can't get back into homes as more dangerous. CAS stop taking at 16 years of age and the social assistance doesn't get until 18 years. There is a gap.
- Shelter allowance and rent gap.
- Community policy training volunteers/support workers. Support workers role needs to be clearly defined. Need to empower tenants thorough education not hand holding.
- Opportunities for homeownership. Lots of different possibilities; grow at home, home start small with opportunity.
- Need storage place for belongings. A place downtown. Things get stolen. Can't get ahead. The homeless keep getting kicked when they are down.

Question 3 - feedback

- Continued interaction.
- Getting all support groups on the same page so everyone fixing and focusing on action.
- Focus on specific action within the community. We need to take a stance with regard to provincial and federal regulations.
- A well defined strategy. A timetable. A logical progression.
- Each one of us as a community needs to address the questions on the list.
- Need a mind set change at Council. Don't tell what they can't do but what they can do.
- Have a game plan for Council. Ask for their permission that what we are doing is right and they will assist to move forward to federal and provincial government.
- Have to go with the plan and have to let Council know what you are expecting.

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- Each agency should supply a list of what they can do. Has to be linked to the 4 strategies.
- Everyone can leave today and put the word out. Get people involved. The whole community.
- Another session after the forum with a progress update...early November.
- There needs to be a lot of building. One would need an increase in income. And skills and trade development.
- Opportunity for agencies to participate at the Forum.
- Provide feedback and notes on this session to all attendees.
- Individual feedback from each attendee on the 3 questions as well as a profile.
- All attendees encourage to attend Forum.
- Forum registration fee may be a hardship – seeking an alternative.

**Feedback from Ed Starr's Focus Group**

All three questions:

- People with severe environmental sensitivity, - huge housing challenge.
- Emergency housing – basic lack of income an important factor – 1967 study identified some issues but at least everyone had a roof over their head.
- There's lots of investment capital available, but investors handcuffed by current regulations
- "Moms and Pops" don't know their rights and have trouble dealing with "at risk" tenant groups.
- Tenants need supportive services (ie. general outreach workers).
- Should be more emphasis on prevention, education among landlords and tenants.
- Need a housing resource centre - City can't do everything – needs to depend on all providers/landlords.
- Need dispute resolution officer.
- Utilities make impossible demands.
- Voluntary direct payment of social assistance to landlords has just been approved in Kingston
- Rooming houses, group homes, etc. – they are a key component to housing market. There are serious problems with how City deals with these and they constrain supply.
- We need to emphasize an infrastructure that facilitates (takes ownership of) interaction among housing providers and service providers. - needs to be part of City structure.
- City should provide technical assistance.
- Difficult to identify existing rooming houses – there is a registration system, but poorly enforced. This needs a full review.
- Don't want to shoot ourselves in the foot and end up evicting people due to enforcement
- Need stronger measures to discourage conversion and demolition of existing rental stock (part of new changes to provincial legislation).
- We are losing basement apartments, etc. Need to make greater efforts on this.
- TPA/tribunal discourages investment by small landlords – a big factor in Kingston.

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- City's website could be more useful – maybe more Q&A – who to call, etc.
- Needs to be proper definitions of terms, etc.
- Could be the registry for people who want to share accommodation (eg. A Room of One's Own).
- City could be the central coordinators of these services.
- Extremely frustrated by lack of sustainable funding.
- Need to find ways to ensure small investors stay in rental market – Homestead is too expensive.
- Need more positive zoning to support accessory apts.
- Looking at “multiple” solutions – involve all stakeholders.
- Stigma/discrimination for people with special needs.
- Have to be really sensitive to people's personal needs and privacy.
- Need appropriate supports.
- We have to educate everybody to break down stereotypes.
- Advocate to restore clawbacks.