

NEW MODELS OF HOUSING FOR SENIORS

Dear Chair and members of the CPSC,

One dilemma we face as a council responding to the need for housing is that we can't use our restrictive powers of zoning to force developers to build something. Fortunately, our Housing Development Corporation (HDC) is the answer to this dilemma because it allows the city to become the developer.

While the HDC opens up many opportunities, the one that excites me most is the chance to use the same cash injection consecutively to develop multiple residences for seniors. Imagine us creating a building with innovative community spaces and a set of accessible units designed for seniors planning to downsize. If we sell the units as condos to cover the cost of development we can then use the money again to build another project like it.

I have had heartbreaking conversations with widows who live alone, can no longer drive, and find themselves to be very lonely. We can do something about this. There are housing models, like the Baba-Yaga house, which would allow them to live on their own while also being part of a community. As a city, we can investigate these models and with an HDC we can build them.

The HDC is already delivering affordable housing in innovative ways with projections of 150 units this year and 300 units from 2020 on. It is time that we look at not only the number of units but the kind of housing that can be delivered. Our HDC provides us with unparalleled opportunities and I would like to see us take advantage of that.

With our population ageing as it is, my request is that;

Staff be directed to seek public input into models of housing that will best serve our seniors in their late retirement years.

Sincere thanks,

Michael van Holst
Councillor, Ward 1