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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS

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May 3rd, 1943.

MEMO RE HOUSING COMMITTEE

Appointment of Committee by Council, February 15, 1943

The following recommendation was contained in the Annual Report of the Town Planning Commission:
"That the City Council consider the appointment of a special committee on Low Cost Housing to include representatives of various interested civic bodies."

The Council appointed the following Committee: Aldermen Buscombe, Corey and Greyell, and Secretary for Zoning Matters.

Why the request for such a Committee was made

As a principle of town planning the Commission is interested in the provision of adequate housing accommodation for persons in the low income brackets, and the abolition of unhealthy housing conditions, but realize that any effort in this direction not directly financed by private enterprise must originate with the City Council and such public bodies, hence the request for the creation of a committee. The term "low cost housing" is a technical one commonly used in connection with housing schemes. It may have lead to some misunderstanding and is better expressed as "low rental housing".

City cannot assume the financial burden

No large city can solve the housing problem alone. Building By-laws, Zoning regulations and demolitions do no more than scratch the surface while the limitation of taxation power and the obligation of maintaining public services make it impossible for a city to undertake housing reform without full national aid.

Housing a Post-War Programme

In spite of the steady increase of population war conditions make it well nigh impossible to relieve the situation to-day, therefore our only hope is a Post-War Programme of Housing. This fact is recognized in all large cities, and the Dominion and Provincial Governments are including housing in all their Post-War Rehabilitation Programmes.

The Work of the Committee

In order to take advantage of such assistance as the Dominion and Provincial Governments may contemplate providing in the matter of housing, the Committee should be in communication with these Governments and also with other large Canadian cities so that any approach to the housing problem may be with unity of thought and action.

There are a number of public bodies and individuals in the City who have given thought and study to this question, and whose services and advice would be of assistance to such a Committee. When hostilities cease and the post-war rehabilitation comes into being, Vancouver should be prepared with a well thought out low rental housing scheme.

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The Need for Proper Housing Accommodation

Prepared charts show that over a period of 25 years there has been a steady increase in population and a very rapid increase during the last two years, but no corresponding increase in the erection of dwellings has taken place. In fact during the last war and the depression, building almost came to a standstill and once again owing to war conditions there is a marked falling off in the number of dwellings erected.

All these factors have and are continuing to create a very unsatisfactory state of overcrowding particularly for persons in the low income brackets. Surveys have revealed the unhappy and unhealthy condition in which many people live, conditions condusive to all forms of delinquency.

Under our present system most persons in the low income brackets are quite unable to erect good standard living quarters for themselves and thus old unsanitary and unsatisfactory buildings are crowded with tenants; shacks are erected in many outlying portions of the City and water fronts are crowded with unsightly shacks. These conditions can only be remedied by concerted public action.

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

10th May, 1943

A meeting of the Housing & Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C., on Monday, 10th May, 1943, at 11:15 o'clock A.M.

Present: Mr. J. C. McPherson, (Chairman); Messrs. F. E. Buck, Earl M. Bennett, H. V. Jackson, F. N. Hamilton, and C. T. Hamilton. Mr. A. J. Harrison, Secretary for Zoning Matters, City Hall, and Miss F. M. Ross, Acting-Secretary.

The meeting was convened to consider a memorandum prepared for Council by Mr. A. J. Harrison, regarding the reasons for requesting the appointment of a Housing Committee. The memo explained that the Commission in its 1942 annual report had recommended a Housing Committee be appointed on Low Cost Housing to include representatives of various interested civic bodies. A committee composed of Aldermen Buscombe, Corey and Greyell, and the Secretary for Zoning Matters, had been appointed. Information on this subject had been obtained from cities and towns all across Canada and much valuable data compiled. Mr. Harrison now suggested that this Committee be enlarged to include the interested civic bodies suggested in the Commission's report, and that the Committee be known as the Post-War Housing Committee. Mr. Harrison asked whether the Committee would approve his memo, as being a resume of matters leading to the appointment of the Housing Committee.

The members were in agreement with the memo, but asked whether it would deal only with post-war housing to be provided at low rental to persons unable to buy their own homes or pay higher rentals, and presumably to be sponsored by the Dominion Government through some municipal agency. Mr. Harrison stated that this was the purpose of the Committee.

The members asked if there was any committee at the City Hall which dealt with the present housing emergency, and Mr. Harrison explained that there is a committee for this purpose.

After some discussion, it was

Moved by Mr. Buck
Seconded by Mr.F.N.Hamilton

THAT the Committee approve the memorandum, but suggest that the powers of the post-war housing committee be wide enough to embrace all phases of post-war housing, in addition to low rental schemes. CARRIED.

Mr. F. N. Hamilton asked whether anything could be done to improve the appearance of the stores which have been converted to living quarters. It was felt that the Commission could do nothing, as there is no law which says that a man must keep his premises neat in appearance. However, Mr. McPherson promised to take up the matter with the Real Estate Exchange in an effort to have the stores made as attractive as possible.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:00 o'clock Noon.

L. M. Ross

Acting-Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING

6th November, 1945

A meeting of the Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B. C., on Tuesday, 6th November, 1945, at 3:30 P.M.

Present: Mr. J. C. McPherson, (Chairman); Messrs. F. E. Buck, Don C. Brown, F. N. Hamilton and W. R. Owen; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary.

Messrs. Jocelyn Davidson of the National Housing Administration, and P. R. U. Stratton of the Vancouver Housing Association, were present on invitation.

The Engineer explained that the Consultants were about to commence the Housing Report, and in order to compare the costs and revenues of various types of housing, it was requested that a survey of three areas be made, one of a blighted or run-down area, another of medium housing, and a third of the more expensive class. In order to be of any value as a basis of comparison, these three areas should be of approximately equal size and include dwellings only.

The Engineer further explained that Prof. C. W. Topping of the University had offered to have the surveys made by his students, during the course of their studies in Sociology. Therefore, he was most anxious to take advantage of this opportunity and to be able to inform Prof. Topping of the areas which would best suit the Commission's needs.

After considerable discussion, it was

Moved by Mr.F.N.Hamilton
Seconded by Mr. Brown

THAT a survey of the following areas be made:

Blighted: The area bounded by Keefer and Union Streets and Jackson and Campbell Avenues;
Medium-Class: The area bounded by 12th and 14th Avenues and Mackenzie and Waterloo Streets;
High-Class: The area bounded by 33rd and King Edward Avenues and Pine Crescent and Marguerite.

CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 P.M.

Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

14th May, 1948

A meeting of the Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B. C., on Friday, 14th May, 1948, at 3:30 P.M.

Present: Mr. F. E. Buck, (Chairman); Messrs. A. J. Harrison, and H. V. Jackson; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer, L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary

The Executive Engineer read a statement prepared by the Chairman, pointing out that Housing today is one of the world's biggest problems, and one closely allied to Planning. He recommended Council be urged to make a Housing Survey for Vancouver.

Considerable discussion took place. It was pointed out that in 1946 the Vancouver Housing Association recommended that such a survey be made. Council turned this recommendation over to the Commission for consideration and report, and the Commission obtained an estimate from the Consultants and recommended to Council that the survey be undertaken.

A survey of the type recommended by the Consultants would be a sample survey only, covering a percentage of homes in the city. Some doubt was expressed as to the efficacy of this system. Others believed it would be necessary to cover every house in the city, but agreed it would be difficult to obtain accurate information.

Mr. Harrison believed that questionnaires should be sent to all homes in the city, guaranteeing that the information given would be strictly confidential and the result tabulated.

Others felt that these questionnaires would be ignored, or the true facts not given, and furthermore pointed out that the Commission did not have the staff to handle such an assignment.

Mr. Jackson felt that this was a matter which could be better handled by the C.P.A.C. and V.H.A.

Mr. Buck suggested that a letter be written to Council, acknowledging the efforts they have been making towards the creation of housing units and stating that the Commission realizes the necessity for the participation by the Dominion Government before there can be any substantial quantity of low cost housing created. In view of Mr. Howe's remarks, the Commission would appreciate it if Council could ascertain the reason for the Government's policy as announced.

As there were only 3 members present, Mr. Buck suggested that such a letter be sent from the Commission after the next meeting.

However, it was decided that a copy of Mr. Buck's proposal be sent to all members of the Committee, and copies of other members' ideas on the subject, also, and at the earliest possible moment, when all members can be present, another meeting of this Committee will be held.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

19 April, 1949

A meeting of the Housing & Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B. C., on Tuesday, 19th April, 1949, at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Mr. P. R. U. Stratton, (Chairman); Messrs. A. J. Harrison, H. V. Jackson; L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 14th May, 1947, were read.

The suggestion made at that meeting, that a questionnaire regarding housing conditions be sent to all homes, was considered, but no action was taken.

The Chairman made the following suggestions:

Low-cost Housing:

In view of recent remarks made by various government officials, he believed that it was possible Vancouver would have a Housing Authority before long. The first question to be considered by such an Authority would be "sites", for housing projects, and he felt that it was the function of the Commission to be ready to present possible sites for such projects which would fit into the Plan of the city, with regard to zoning, utilities, transit, schools, parks, etc., and which would be for the most part on undeveloped property. In making a survey of such sites the Commission could undoubtedly receive much assistance from the City Lands Department, City Engineering Department, and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Moved by Mr. Jackson
Seconded by Mr. Harrison

THAT it be recommended to the Commission that a letter be written Council referring to the Commission's plans to survey areas suitable for redevelopment or rehabilitation and possible sites for low-rental housing, and requesting that the C.M.H.C. be asked to supply the Commission with any material they may possess on housing sites in the city. CARRIED

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Slum Clearance: Blighted Areas

The Chairman felt that when the time arrived that the housing shortage was not so acute, that a program of slum clearance and rehabilitation of blighted areas would have to be undertaken. He felt it was the duty of the Commission to have surveys made of such areas, with suggestions as to the best method of improving them.

Mr. Harrison pointed out that the Dominion Housing Act contained a clause dealing with rehabilitation, and the Secretary was requested to have copies made for all members of the Committee.

It was also pointed out that a survey of one such area had been made under the sponsorship of the UBC by Dr. Marsh, with financial assistance from the city, but that to date the report on this survey had not been published. It was believed this information would be of interest to the Commission, and it was

Moved by Mr. Jackson
Seconded by Mr. Harrison

THAT it be recommended to the Commission that a letter be written to Council requesting a copy of the Marsh report from CMHC, towards which the city had made a grant, and if the report is not available, asking information as to when it may be. CARRIED

Standard of Housing By-law

It was felt that housing conditions would be greatly improved if a Standard of Housing By-law could be set up and enforced. It was pointed out that a Special Sub-committee of Council, on which the Commission was represented by its Executive Engineer, had been set up to outline such a By-law. Assuch as By-law would cover not only existing housing, but would also become applicable to all new housing, difficulty was being encountered in co-relating the needs of the Health and Building Departments, in order to make such a By-law workable.

Moved by Mr. Jackson
Seconded by Mr. Harrison

THAT the matter be discussed with the Executive Engineer to ascertain if, in his opinion, it would be advisable to write Council asking what progress has been made on the setting up of a Standard of Housing By-law for Vancouver. CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Secretary

The TPC proposes to undertake a general survey of slums and blighted areas with a ~~few~~ view to recommending methods for their redevelopment or rehabilitation, together with a study of possible sites for low rental housing projects which might be required in conjunction with such redevelopment projects. It is understood that ~~x~~ the regional office of the CMHC ~~x~~ have made a fairly exhaustive study of available housing sites in the city, and we would request that the City Council request the Corporation for copies of any material they may have assembled in this connection.

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

20TH APRIL, 1950

A meeting of the Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C., on Thursday, 20th April, 1950, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mr. P. R. U. Stratton, (Chairman); Messrs. J. Davidson, Prof. Lasserre, Alderman Proctor and W. N. Wallace; H. W. Gray; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer, L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary.

Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 19th April, 1949, were taken as read.

Copies of a report of the Unofficial Housing Authority, the Vancouver Housing Association, and of the Resume on the Slum-Clearance and Urban Rehabilitation of the Strathcona Area, has been forwarded to all members of the Committee.

A letter dated 17th April, 1950, was read from the City Clerk, stating that Council had asked the Commission to report in connection with specific areas which are considered to require redevelopment. Council also recommended that the Survey carried out by the Henry Hudson Parent-Teacher Association dated 18th February, 1950, be referred to the Commission when dealing with the matter.

A copy of the Henry Hudson- PTA Survey was read.

As a beginning, the Chairman suggested that the Committee consider 4 areas. These were outlined on maps, and each member was presented with a brief making recommendations for Nos.

1. Area covered by Henry Hudson P.T.A. Brief: bounded by Burrard and Granville Streets and 1st and 4th Avenues.

2. Area between False Creek and Burrard Street and Pacific and Robson Street

3. Area between Brunswick Street and Glen Drive, and from Broadway to G. N. Railway property

4. Area between Gore Avenue and Glen Drive, and from Hastings Street to the False Creek fill.

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No 1:

It was felt that the recommendation of the Henry Hudson P.T.A. with regard to No. 1 would be advisable, i.e. that this area, long zoned as an industrial district be cleared of its present residential development of old, sub-standard housing, and preserved for industrial development only. However, no recommendation was made as to how this could be done as it would require that the whole area be purchased by the city, other accommodation be obtained for the residents, and the land cleared for industrial use.

No. 2

It was felt that the situation would right itself as the old residences were demolished, and the property absorbed in the business development of the city. No dwellings apart from multiple dwellings would be erected owing to the class of construction imposed by the Fire Limits By-law

Nos. 3 and 4.

It was felt that these areas presented possible sites for slum clearance and redevelopment projects. However, it was felt that all four areas should be inspected before any further discussion took place, and it was left with the Secretary and the Chairman to arrange a tour.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

2ND MAY, 1950

The Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission met in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C., on Tuesday, 2nd May, 1950, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mr. P.R.U. Stratton, (Chairman); Messrs. C. Brakenridge, A. J. Harrison, F. Lasserre and Alderman A. F. Proctor; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer, and L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer.

The Committee then proceeded on a tour of the following areas with regard to their possibilities for slum clearance and redevelopment:

1. Area bounded by Burrard and Granville Streets 1st and 4th Avenues;

2. Area between False Creek and Burrard Inlet, Pacific and Robson Streets;

3. Area between Brunswick Street and Glen Drive, and from Broadway to G. N. Railway property;

4. Area between Gore Avenue and Glen Drive, and from Hastings Street to the False Creek fill.

Owing to the lateness of the hour the Committee decided to meet again and discuss their findings.

The meeting dispersed at 5:15 p.m.

Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

19th May, 1950

A meeting of the Housing & Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West PenderStreet, Vancouver, B. C., on Friday, 19th May, 1950, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Messrs. C. Brakenridge, J. Davidson, F. Lasserre, and W. N. Wallace; J. Alexander Walker, L. R. Munroe, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary

It was explained that the Chairman, Mr. Stratton, was out of town and would not return until the middle of September. Mr. Davidson was requested to preside.

Areas suitable for redevelopment: Slum Clearance

In response to Council's request for a report on the above, two meetings of the Committee had been held and a tour made of several areas. A draft report prepared by the Executive Engineer was studied. With regard to the area north and east of Henry Hudson School, it was decided that no mention of trackage should be made. It was also decided to eliminate any reference to purchase of the property by the City for re-sale. The matter was discussed at some length, but it was felt it would be desirable to have a further meeting, with the Medical Health Officer and the Building Inspector in attendance in order to obtain their views and advice.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Secretary

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HOUSING AND BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

23rd JUNE, 1950

A meeting of the Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C., on Friday, 23rd June, 1950, at 2:15 p.m.

Present: Messrs. C. Brakenridge, A. J. Harrison, F. Lasserre and J. C. McPherson; Dr. Stewart Murray, Medical Health Officer, H. P. Reusch, of the City Health Department and Andrew Haggart, Building Inspector; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer; L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary.

The Committee met again to consider the two requests of Council:

a) That the Commission report in connection with specific areas which are considered to require redevelopment;

b) That the Commission consider the survey of the Henry Hudson Parent Teacher Association when dealing with the above matter.

Dr. Murray and Mr. Reush reported the Health Department's findings in connection with a special survey of the area mentioned by the Henry Hudson P.T.A.

Mr. Haggart stated that his Department had a number of buildings throughout the city scheduled for condemnation, but nothing could be done until housing accommodation could be found for the tenants. Also, if the owners decided to do enough repair work to bring these houses up to the minimum standards of safety then they could not be ordered demolished.

It was pointed out that this was the third meeting to be held on this difficult problem, and it was felt that no further consideration could be given until the Commission could be definitely advised that the city has the funds and is seriously prepared to consider the wholesale rehabilitation of any area or areas. However, it was felt that the following recommendations could be made.

1) To amend the Zoning By-law so that residential development could not take place in any Light Industrial District in the city. (This regulation at present applies only in the Heavy Industrial Districts).

2) To extend the #2 fire limit to cover the Light Industrial District of the area mentioned specifically by the Henry Hudson P.T.A., or further, as agreed to by Messrs. Haggart and Walker

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The effect of these recommendations would be to stop new residential building in this area, and to prohibit existing residences being rehabilitated to such a degree that they would be perpetuated indefinitely.

The extension of the #2 fire limit is considered desirable also because of the approaches to the new Granville Bridge passing over a portion of this area. It is also understood that in recent years very little residential development has taken place in any of the Light Industrial Districts, so that no great hardship would be suffered by any of the property owners concerned.

It was

Moved by Mr. McPherson
Seconded by Mr. Harrison

THAT a report along the above lines be prepared by the Executive Engineer for consideration at the next meeting of the Commission. CARRIED

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Secretary

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HOUSING & BLIGHTED AREAS COMMITTEE

21st March, 1951

A meeting of the Housing and Blighted Areas Committee of the Vancouver Town Planning was held in the Board Room, 309 Royal Trust Building, 626 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C. on Wednesday, 21st March, 1951, at 2:00 p.m.

Present: Mr. P. R. U. Stratton, (Chairman); Messrs. C. Brakenridge, A. J. Harrison, F. Lasserre, A. F. Proctor and J. F. Watson; J. Alexander Walker, Executive Engineer, L. R. Munroe, Assistant Engineer, and Miss F. M. Ross, Secretary.

Areas Considered Suitable for Rehabilitation

The Chairman drew attention to a communication from Council dated 17th April, 1950, requesting the Commission to report in connection with specific areas which are considered to require redevelopment, with specific reference to the area adjacent to the Henry Hudson School in Kitsilano.

On 7th July, 1950, the Commission had made certain recommendations to Council which Council had adopted or is in the process of adopting. However, the Commission did not make any recommendations regarding specific areas considered to require redevelopment, believing that such a detailed study should be carried out unless Council advised that it is prepared to undertake a substantial rehabilitation project.

The Chairman felt that in view of the Marsh Report on the Strathcona School Area (copies of which had been forwarded to all members of the Commission) the Committee should study the area and if it is considered a suitable area for rehabilitation, such a recommendation should be made to Council and steps taken towards zoning it for some type of residential district.

He also recommended that further consideration be given to the area covered by the Henry Hudson P.T.A. survey. He suggested condemnation of unsanitary buildings, expropriation and consolidation by the City of properties for industrial uses.

With regard to the Henry Hudson area the Committee pointed out that the residents would have to be re-housed elsewhere which might prove difficult. Also it believed that expropriation and consolidation of properties would be a very costly undertaking for the city to assume.

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Some discussion took place on the area outlined in Dr. Marsh's Report, but it was finally

Moved by Alderman Proctor
Seconded by Mr. Harrison

THAT this Committee take no action at the present time, but that, at the call of the Chair and the concenience of the majority, a tour of the Strathcona School Area be arranged.

CARRIED

The Executive Engineer was requested to arrange the loan of aerial photographs covering the above area.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Secretary

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