



**Houselink Community Homes  
Board Meeting Minutes  
November 20, 2018**

**Present:** Phillip Dufresne (Chair), Linda McNeil, Mary Modeste, Joann Sochor, Colette Snyder, Charles Finlay, Hugh Cameron, Mark Guttridge, Richa Jagota

**On Phone:** Natalie Ochrym

**Regrets:** Douglas Jordan

**Guest:** XXXXX

**Staff:** Brian Davis, Helen Cheung, Peter Marra, Monica Vaus (Minutes)

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Mark Guttridge

Seconded by: Hugh Cameron

Carried

**Conflict of Interest**

No conflict of interest declared

**Consent Agenda Items**

Moved by: Linda McNeil

Seconded by: Joann Sochor

Carried

**Business Arising or Any consent Agenda Items requiring action or further discussion**

According to our previous by-laws, Houselink had to have 2 General Members Meetings each year. With the new by-laws, we switched to Town Halls. We are going to reduce our Town Halls by at least one, which will allow us to direct these savings to our community kitchen food budget. We can also look at linking a Town Hall session to another Houselink activity so we maximize attendance and also save on hall rental space, etc. With this new flexibility, we can always still organize a Town Hall whenever we need to in the future.

Discussion also focused on community rate harmonization. Houselink must be strategic about the cost-per-individual served and how we compare to other organizations. The

government wants to improve healthcare services without any additional monies so they are going to look at any possible way to save costs. One potential risk is that they do not see the value in our Community Kitchen and Social Recreation programs in which the staff are funded primarily through the TCLHIN.

### **Fundraising Mid-Term Report**

A report providing a summary of fundraising activities as of October 31, 2018 was distributed along with a separate excel financial tracking spreadsheet.

The overall goal for this year is \$160,000 to help support Houselink's programs. Currently, we are tracking below target having achieved 42% of the annual target with a 50% time lapsed. This is on par with the same time last year when we were at 44% of the annual target. The last six months of this fiscal period will push revenues higher with a projection to meet our budget requirement.

Some highlights included:

- Forecasting year end at \$80,000 - \$90,000 combined foundation and corporate receipts
- Forecasting year end at \$30,000 combined major donor contributions
- A disappointing end to our participation in the annual *Raising the Roof Campaign* with a decline in the grant due to Raising the Roof not being able to obtain national corporate sponsors.
- Our **new signature event** is *Coldest Night of the Year* (CNOY)
- Fundraising is a team effort and the key to our success will be volunteers to help organize, set-up, walk, and raise pledges
- For example: a 200 person event (25 teams of 8 walkers/team) will require 6 Lead Volunteers Posts and 40 Event Volunteers
- The more team captains we have for CNOY, the more we will make
- Our CNOY goal is \$25,000 including corporate sponsors
- A sub-committee has been created to manage our *Adopt-a-Kitchen Campaign*
- Seeking greater exposure to media for Adopt-a-Kitchen this year and have approached media outlets such as Breakfast TV and holiday giving guides in print
- We have increased our profile by engaging in external community activities and events during the first 6 months of the fiscal year.

**Action: Everyone is encouraged to become a team captain for the CNOY or volunteer in another capacity to ensure a successful signature event for Houselink.**

### **Motion to receive the Fundraising Mid-Term Report**

Moved: Joann Sochor

Seconded by: Charles Finlay

Carried

## **Overview of Website Changes**

Houselink has been working with a volunteer marketing professional to improve our messaging. The intent is to answer what we do, why we do it, why we are unique, and what is our impact from our home page in a concise manner. The content and visuals were taken from our 2017-2018 Annual Impact Report.

Our goal is to make our website, more of our communication hub and should contain all of our promotional materials. As such, our website should be kept current and up-to-date. This is a change in our thinking and a shift from focussing heavily on information that is of more interest to our funders.

Everyone was encouraged to not only look at the new website, but especially to have family or friends who are not familiar with Houselink or supportive housing look at it. Do they understand what Houselink does? Do they have any suggestions?

**Action: Send feedback regarding the website back to Brian and Peter.**

## **Semi-Annual Vacancy Report**

This report reflects the vacancy activities for the first half of the 2017-2018 fiscal year. A vacancy rate is the percentage of available rental units. A lower vacancy rate means there are fewer places available to rent. Vacancy rates are calculated on the last day of each month.

Our vacancy rate at 4.8% is still significantly above our target of 3%. This has been caused by a multitude of factors, both persistent systematic issues and some short term issues, which are outlined in the report compiled by Jason Graine, Intake Referral Coordinator. While some short term issues, (i.e. building fire and fire code demands), have been resolved, mitigation strategies have been implemented to address the increasing vacancy rate (details see p. 9-10).

## **Motion to receive the Semi-Annual Vacancy Report**

Moved by: Joann Sochor

Seconded by: Charles Finlay

Carried

## **Remembering Nicole Tushingam and the Resulting Vacant Board Seat**

Family members, neighbours, staff, board members and friends - are still coming to terms with Nicole's sudden passing. Brian thanked Board members who attended the Houselink memorial service on the 8th or the funeral service for Nicole on Saturday, November 10th. He and Phillip spoke on behalf of the Board. They noted that both workers and residents remember Nicole as someone who had a wonderful smile, always upbeat, very patient and kind to her neighbours – and a good cook. Her desire to be on the Board was yet another example of how she wished to give back to the community.

The Board will now need to decide whether to fill the seat left vacant by Nicole. As there was only one member candidate opening and 3 people were acclaimed last year, we did not do any outreach, and so we do not have any names of interested candidates.

Furthermore, we will be recruiting in just a couple of months through our February mailer.

### **Motion to hold the seat vacant until the June Annual General Meeting**

Moved by: Richa Jagota

Seconded by: Joann Sochor

Carried

### **Generative Discussion – Direction of This New Government and Potential Impact on Supportive Housing and our Sector – What we know and don't know yet**

The ED Report provided a few points to aid the discussion and some questions to consider:

- *How do we engage our residents in civic action?*
- *How does the new government direction and approach inform our strategic initiatives?*
- *What is the alignment between Houselink's goals and this new government's goals – and within that alignment, make the best use of opportunities?*

Some comments included:

- Not optimistic about new money for this sector or other social programs
- No cuts to the health budget this year but it may happen in the 2019 budget
- Difficult to figure out their rationale for some of their decision as they do little in the way of public consultation
- A very strong central government – the Premier's office has a lot of authority
- Can expect the first two years of being in power to be the most disruptive and the last two years of a government to be less as they will be on the campaign trail
- Need to pay attention to the details of how they roll out reforms in social assistance i.e. ODSP
- Actual budget in the spring could be brutal

On the bright side:

- 3.9 billion dollars has been dedicated to mental health
- Devlin has noted that he believes in supportive housing and it's a cheaper alternative to hospital care
- Houselink has survived conservative governments in the past and when Harper was in power we had one of our biggest growth spurts

### **In-Camera – EDPA Update & Check-in Motion**

Moved by: Charles Finlay

Seconded by: Mary Modeste

Carried

**Out-of-Camera – EDPA Update & Check-In Motion**

Moved by: Joann Sochor

Seconded by: Mark Guttridge

Carried

**Action: EDPA Final Update Re-scheduled to January 2019 Meeting**

**Adjournment**

Moved by: Hugh Cameron

Seconded by: Richa Jagota

Carried