

## “Building Housing Solutions Together” Facilitated Session

January 23, 2014, Courtenay Fire Hall

### **Notes from the Options for Governance Group Activity Reporting to the Plenary**

#### **Group #1**

Did not take notes on flip chart, one member reported out verbally, other members filled in. Notes from verbal report out taken by Shannon Pickering and Ronna-Rae Leonard.

#### Option 1 – PNP

##### Advantages

- More likely to get an charismatic leader
- Independent
- Autonomous

##### Disadvantages

- Potential conflict of interest if run by service organizations/elected leaders
- Community may not have the volunteer capacity
- Another non-profit, may be competing for limited resources with other non-profits

No consensus on one recommendation. Question is what “house” would a social planner or other professional live in.

Agreed need for some one with professional expertise to provide leadership and credibility. Some of the options considered:

- Courtenay house the Social Planner, show leadership
- MNP with a social planner at the helm which reports to the CVRD

#### **Group #2**

Report back with 3 Flip Charts worth of notes and 2 presenters from group.

#### Option 1 - Private Non Profit

Local Example: CV Social Planning Council

##### Disadvantage:

- New group, at least 1 year to get charitable tax status. Mitigation: partnership with existing charity
- No secure funding
- Burn out of volunteers (critical to long-term sustainability, changing world means less volunteers)
- Donor fatigue – one of many groups

## Group #2 Continued

Advantage:

- No bureaucratic stigma, separateness from government versus legitimacy. Mitigation: well established organization that is already stable.

Philosophical Issue: Is Affordable Housing and Homelessness really the responsibility of private sector or community? Or is it the responsibility of elected government?

Option 2 – Municipal Non profit

Local Example: EDS, Community Justice Centre

- Eligible for grants that are not available to local government
- More likely to get core funding from local government, and stability, particularly if it is a function of RD
- All local governments can participate equitably
- Advantage: autonomy from local government but accountable
- Disadvantage: less accountable to local government
- Advantage: non-partisan, less susceptible to special interest takeover
- Build in service review – increase transparency
- Advantage: built in autonomy of local government jurisdiction as well as collaboration. Seed money from local government
- Likely more Regional buy-in

Option 3 – Function of Local Government, Committee or Social Planner or both

Disadvantages:

- Optics – pessimism, fear of bureaucracy gobbling up funds.
- Not big enough to support social planner staff.
- Strain on social planner, housing part could take back seat
- Perceived risk – jurisdictional competition, how to be fair

Advantages:

- Good concept
- Establishing legitimacy, local government in business of providing services
- Contracting out local expertise – less feasible

Group #2 Recommendation – Option 2 MNP

- Fits economy of scale
- Flexibility – funding, contracting, staff
- Appearance of arms length but strong ties/accountable
- Ability to create hybrid model

### Group #3

#### Option 1 – PNP model

##### Weaknesses:

- This model already exists, a more over-arching model is needed

##### Strengths:

- Politicians not in control – independent
- Clearing house or all existing not for profits and supports all groups and fills the gaps

Must be neutral and independent of other not for profits but could include members of the not for profits. Funding could be from community groups i.e. municipal grants.

Barriers: competing for scarce funds and ongoing funding

#### Option 2 – MNP

##### Strengths:

- Secure funding mechanism is a strength
- We have this existing body called EDS that could adapt its mandate and take on the needs of housing (the whole continuum)
- All Valley government are engaged with ED
- This model ties economic development and social issues together – we cant keep working in isolation

Barriers: opposition from ED to morphing, could be a lack of expertise on the Board

#### Recommended Option - MNP

- Ideal model for Comox Valley exists inside the existing Economic Development Society, overarching body that unites the Valley, meets social housing issues with economic activity
- This allow the not for profits to do their work with a neutral supportive body that does not compete for the same scarce funding sources
- We feel that given ED is established this is not a big stretch for them to adapt part of their mandate
- Don't need to reinvent the wheel

#### Option 3 – LG Function – Social Planner

##### Con:

- May be difficult to get community support
- Seen as unnecessary expense
- Seen as political hook
- As a staff member they (the social planner) may lose their autonomy

##### Pro:

- Set structure and funding, better engaged with City Hall, so more aware with inside info, i.e. zoning, land acquisition, bylaws.

## **Group #4**

Did not take notes, one member reported out verbally. Notes from verbal report out taken by Shannon Pickering and Ronna-Rae Leonard.

### Option #1 – PNP

#### Disadvantages:

- May lack credibility and authority
- Conflict of interest with board and other service providers
- May not be representative of the community
- More difficult to be responsive

#### Advantages:

- Independence/autonomy from government (but this can also be a disadvantage)

### Recommendation – LG Function with Social Planner

- Professional expertise
- Collective engagement
- Strong advisory Committee (service providers) to provide input to the function is very important

## **Individual Preference**

At the end of the day, participants were asked to indicate their individual preference. There was a piece of flip chart paper labeled with Option 2 – Municipal Not Profit and a separate one labeled Option 3 – Local Government Function. Participants marked a 1 on their first choice, and a 2 on their second choice. The majority preferred Option 2 – MNP by a margin of 2 to 1. Not all participants remained at the end of the discussion or chose to vote.

Results were as follows:

MNP – 20 responses in total  
12 indicated MNP as their first choice  
8 indicated MNP as their second choice

LG Function – 18 responses in total  
6 indicated LGF as their first choice (2 noting and a strong advisory committee is necessary)  
11 indicated LGF their second choice