

Mayor and Council  
City of White Rock

May 11, 2022

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

The White Rock Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) is directed by Council Policy #164, and is mandated to provide input to Council regarding local level policies, programs and incentives that may be used to support a range of housing options and affordability levels in the City. The HAC operates like any other advisory committee does and has done in the City for many years.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, Council received the Housing Needs Report for the City. As a result of that report, the City engaged a planning consultant, Mr. Joseph Calenda, to prepare in coordination with staff, a draft Housing Strategy which would build on the Housing Needs Report. This strategy became the work plan for the HAC, outlined to the Committee members February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. The goal was to complete an outline strategy within 90 days. The Advisory Committee diligently addressed the action plan, which ultimately led to the delivery of the report to City Council on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The clear expectation by everyone who follows City business was that Council would receive and then openly discuss the merits or shortcomings of the Housing Strategy report. Instead, the Council voted against receipt of the report. Specifically, Councillor Johanson stated that she wanted it removed from the agenda; she strongly voiced rejection of receipt of the report, and further suggested that Council had not even asked for the report, nor were the terms of reference approved by Council. She was supported in opposition by Councillor Kristjanson, claiming he was "blindsided" by the report. These are falsehoods. Of course the City asked for the report, and they also approved the terms of reference for the HAC committee. The City also hired a qualified outside consultant, specifically for the purpose of developing the draft strategy and action plan. The non-receipt of the report translates to not just a waste of Mr. Calenda's time, whose efforts represent a "sunk" cost to the taxpayers', but is a clear rebuke and dismissal of the volunteers on the Housing Advisory Committee; volunteers who are residents, business owners and neighbours who care about this community.

Council is empowered to consider, debate and accept or reject any recommendations from any Advisory Committee as they see fit, in the best interests of this community. But if Council won't receive reports they mandate in the first place, and then openly discuss the pros and cons, they are abrogating their responsibilities. It begs the question to what purpose do staff, advisory committees and consulting experts even exist? Why would anyone ever volunteer to be involved (again) in such a dysfunctional process?

Discarding the HAC volunteers' input and genuine efforts, after they've been encouraged to participate in an open, democratic process that is promoted in this City, creates bad faith and mistrust. I respectfully request of Council to reconsider receiving the Housing Strategy report as presented, and engage in further discussions on its merits.

Yours Truly,

Brian Hagerman

