

11.3.14 Sale of Arrowdale for Affordable Housing Funds

WHEREAS on June 21, 2019, Bill C-97, which includes the National Housing Strategy Act, received Royal Assent and recognizes housing as a human right for the first time in Canadian legislation; and

WHEREAS safe, quality, affordable housing is widely accepted and acknowledged to be a key social determinant of health that has a profound impact on physical and mental health, job security, food security, family unification, community well-being and is considered to be a highly effective catalyst for employment and local investment; and

WHEREAS the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) have reported unhealthy rental vacancy rates in the City of Brantford and Brant County since 2016 with the most recent being reported to be a record low of 1.5%; and

WHEREAS the CMHC has reported average market rents to be \$975 per month but online and other resources that advertise rental properties are commanding rents that are much, much higher than reported; and

WHEREAS there is already an existing, demonstrated and growing need for good, safe and affordable rental housing in Brantford, as evidenced in part by over 1,700 households on the Brantford Access to Housing social housing wait list, the 69% increase in shelter usage in 2019 over 2018 and the increase in homelessness encampments throughout the City; and

WHEREAS the foregoing statistics are similar or worse to statistics in much larger urban centres in Ontario where experts, advocates and scholars have deemed the situation to be a “housing crisis”; and

WHEREAS the number of households is projected to grow to over 73,000 by 2030; and

WHEREAS the Brantford-Brant Housing Stability Plan has identified a revised target for developing its municipally owned housing of 506 units between 2020 and 2030 to maintain current service level standards against projected population growth in the City of Brantford and Brant County; and

WHEREAS the cost of land, pre-development studies and construction costs for new affordable housing can average as much as \$230K per unit; and

WHEREAS on June 25, 2019, Council approved its 2019 Council Priorities which includes the “Housing Continuum” priority to increase the supply and access to social and affordable housing options for Brantford residents; and

WHEREAS on October 22, 2019, Council approved the Brantford-Brant Municipal Housing Master Plan which provides initial cost projections of \$108 million to construct 506 units over the next 10 years, offset by projected resources of \$36 million, leaving an estimated shortfall of \$72 million; and

WHEREAS the City of Brantford has many important and valuable assets that contribute to the enjoyment and richness of the community but not all of which represent a sustainable, efficient, “best use” use of taxpayers’ money; and

WHEREAS the investment in housing not only makes good social sense, it makes good economic sense as the activity with highest multiplier effect and return on investment with every dollar spent returning an equivalent in savings of \$2-3 dollars in social and economic value; and

WHEREAS affordable housing can be developed and operated in a financially viable and self-sustaining manner that provides a high rate of return for public investment; and

WHEREAS the City already owns and efficiently operates 1,476 units of mixed income quality affordable housing and has experience in developing new sustainable and high-quality housing;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT Arrowdale Municipal Golf Course located at 282 Stanley Street with an area of approximately 49 acres, BE DISPOSED OF through a fair and open process, and the proceeds less any costs associated with the disposition, be allocated to affordable housing within the municipal boundaries of the City of Brantford; and
- B. THAT a portion of the lands BE RETAINED for future parkland consisting of not less than 15 acres in a location determined by staff who shall consult with the public on both the design of the park and the amenities to be situated in the park; and
- C. THAT the equivalent amount of municipal property tax revenues generated from the redevelopment of this property BE TRANSFERRED annually into a reserve fund to be used for affordable housing; and
- D. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to develop a plan and REPORT BACK by the end of January 2020 on options to assist members in transition from Arrowdale Golf Course to Northridge Golf Course, including an option for lifetime free memberships at Northridge Golf Course for anyone holding an Arrowdale Membership in 2019; and

- E. THAT Staff BE DIRECTED to continue to operate Arrowdale Golf Course for the 2020 golf season with a view to ensuring a memorable final season for the course; and to ensure that the sale of Arrowdale Golf Course, and all documents and agreements relating to said sale, contain provisions to allow for the completion of the 2020 golf season at the course.