



MEMO

Date: November 27, 2023

To: Town of Lincoln Committee of the Whole

From: Noel Walker, Chair of the Lincoln Housing Select Committee

Subject: Recommendations regarding the provision of affordable and attainable housing in the 4129 Hixon St. development applications

In 2019 the Government of Canada passed the National Housing Strategy Act (NHS Act) which recognized that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right. This belief is based on the reality that without proper housing, it is often not possible for members in our community to get and keep employment, recover from mental illness or other disabilities, and escape physical or emotional violence.

While many of us can take for granted the security that safe, adequate, and affordable housing provides the reality is that many within our Town are not. Based on data from Niagara Region, it is estimated that there are 552 households in Lincoln that are experiencing Core Housing Need and 1,114 households on the Centralized Housing Waitlist to access affordable housing units in Lincoln. Last year, a survey conducted by Town Planning staff indicated that 40% of respondents were concerned or very concerned about losing their home within the next year or in the foreseeable future.

To help increase the housing options that are available for local households with low and moderate incomes, the Town of Lincoln established the Housing Select Committee in the fall of 2022. Among the Committee's scope of activities is reviewing and providing comments on development proposals that are of a residential land use.

Upon our review, the Committee has noted that there are many positive aspects of the proposed development. These include a mixture of dwelling types and sizes, a range of prices for the ownership housing, and the inclusion of a purpose-built rental building with affordable and attainable rents. Such features are conducive to creating neighbourhoods that allow households of varying sizes and incomes to live in one area and provide the ability for households to age within the community.

While these are important features the Committee feels very strongly that approval of the apartment building should include features that strengthen its ability to provide affordable and attainable rental housing in Lincoln. In particular, the Committee recommends that the following be considered:

- Guarantees that the apartment building will be a purpose-built rental building and not an owner tenure,
- Increase the number of affordable apartments in the building to at least 20% of the proposed units, and
- Extend the minimum affordability period for the proposed affordable apartment dwellings to at least 20 years.

The provision of affordable and attainable housing in this development is supported by a range of planning policies from all levels of government. Within Lincoln, the draft Council Priorities policy for 2022 – 2026 states that a strategic priority of Council will be “promoting diversified housing options to meet the current economic landscape, changing needs of families and households, and the aging population”. The proposed development and the recommendations contained within this memo will help meet this strategic priority.

Should Town Planning staff or members of the Committee of the Whole wish to speak more about this matter please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Regards,

Noel Walker,

Chair of the Housing Select Committee