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Working With Your Municipality: Adventures in Two Tier Land

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Intro: Two Tier Municipalities

- Challenge to get Municipal Service Manager on board as well as area municipalities which don't have program responsibilities for housing
- Area municipalities do have Planning Act responsibilities for providing a range of housing, including affordable, under Provincial Policy Statement
- (By The Way: Need stronger municipal powers under Planning Act for municipalities that want to implement inclusionary zoning)



Still Need for Serious Fed/Prov. Housing Funding/Programs

Don't want to let Province and Fed gov't "off the hook"

- Need a National Housing Strategy
- Need significant provincial funds – latest IAH 1,125 per year over 6 years (50% fed funding)
- Much lower funding compared to the two provincial govts of late 1980s and early 1990s



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Cambridge

- Kiwanis projects 23 units
- Incentives – Region of Waterloo capital funding (AH)/regional grant to offset Regional DCs
- Already at single family rate for new multi-residential
- Had to make request to City for long term deferral of city DCs – \$166,566
- Positive relationship of Kiwanis – helpful in making the case



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Cambridge Housing Sub-committee

- Advocating for a clear local municipal policy on affordable housing
- Created brochure
- One on one meeting with each councillor – explain policies brought in place by other municipalities
- Esp. Peterborough



Cambridge Advocacy

Push for Cambridge policy for:

- No payment of City DCs
- Tax increment financing (no property tax increase for up to 20 years)
- Clear definition of affordable – focus on rental CMHC avg. rent or below
- Council passed policy in principle in spring 2014
- Now working with City staff for a written policy
- Will help leverage some mixed affordable with 80% of average and average rent.



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Oxford County

- Restructured County since 1978
- Shared planning staff – work for area municipalities but are technically County employees
- Exact same definition of affordable housing in County OP as in area municipal OPs – brings clarity
- With modest IAH funds – trying to stretch – two projects will both advocate for area municipal DCs to be offsetting grant
- Two projects pushing for 25 year deferral of property taxes as key to financial viability



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Guelph/Wellington County

- Wellington is SM while Guelph is separated city with larger population/greater housing needs
- Guelph has been working on Affordable Housing Strategy and use housing reserve funds over past decade (passed new multi-res property tax rate a decade ago)



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Michael House, Guelph

- Michael House: 9 unit in Guelph, focus on supported housing for young mothers
- Had some confusion over affordable definition for 9th unit at CMHC average rent, rather than 80% IAH funded
 - Appealed directly to City council to and did access funds (\$160,000 from Housing Reserve fund) to offset:
 - City development charges
 - Committee of adjustment fees
 - Site plan fees
 - Building permit fees
 - Parkland levy



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New Guelph Project

- Challenge as most of City reserve fund is now spent
- City is in process of setting out new strategy
- Define affordable
- Make clear policy in terms of incentives
- Set policy on use of surplus land



Conclusion

- Try to use precedents of well-known non-profits/charities to codify an area municipal housing policy within a two tier structure
- May get “benefit” of area municipality only wanting to set a policy for non-profits rather than private sector affordable.

