Flip Chart Notes – Affordable Housing
All Candidates Meeting
September 30, 2015

Attitudes

- Look at the attitudes towards affordable housing:
    - We need different levels of government to put aside their differences, recognise the importance and need of affordable housing, and the need to work TOGETHER to find a solution
    - We need a unified vision for how to address affordable housing needs across the country
    - Are we a community that wants to see all Canadians living at least at a certain standard of living (eg. In a stable home)? Suggestion is, yes!

Funding

- Too much downloading of responsibility for affordable housing, without enough financial support to implement affordable housing projects
- The federal government needs to provide funding and a national strategy for affordable housing
- Who is responsible for affordable housing?
    - All members of society
    - All levels of government
- Need local support, but also federal funding for the organisation of an affordable housing plan. Right now there is not enough funding.
    - We need to address the gap between the amount of funding the government is offering towards affordable housing, and the amount of need.
    - Even the new offers put out by each of the parties is not enough to address affordable housing need
    - Some federal funds for affordable housing has been frozen in the region for the next 4-7 years
- It feels like all the parties are promising numbers for affordable housing, but none of these numbers are enough to address the huge need for affordable housing. How will each party react when they are told the truth; that their funding offers are not enough? Who will really prioritize affordable housing? How?
- Community and society would save money by investing in housing (eg. In healthcare and policing costs)

Income Security

- People on ODSP and income security do not receive enough funding to afford first and last months rent, which makes finding a place to rent very difficult

- ODSP and income security is NOT enough to pay for rent and other life necessities. For example, people sometimes have to choose between food, rent, healthcare, and heating.
- It is difficult to separate housing from income
    - It is important to look at the whole picture
    - Minimum wage is part of the picture
- Steady and stable housing allows people the ability to focus on other parts of life (eg. Education and work)

Legislation / Government Involvement

- Needed to ensure affordable housing is included in new condominium units:
    - This should also address the size of affordable housing units provided
- Utilise existing tools more effectively
    - Ex better use of inclusionary zoning to ensure more affordable housing units are built when private developments are put up:
    - Can the federal government help provide incentives for this?
    - Can the federal government help play a visioning role in this?
- Can 1% of the HST/GST be earmarked for affordable housing?
- Can we have a federally funded study to look at the most effective way to address a national need for affordable housing?
    - A study that looks at the affordable housing experiences of other countries
    - A study that looks at what level of government, and what planning level is most effective to address affordable housing in other countries (eg national, regional, or municipal?)
    - Currently, a lot of pressure rests on regions and municipalities to conduct affordable housing research; this limits research from addressing higher level government solutions to affordable housing, which may be more effective and efficient economically at addressing the need for affordable housing.
- Can we put rent-to-own policies in place?
    - People could only sell back to the government
    - But this would allow them to build up equity
    - This would also help build pride in where people live
- How can we reduce the wait list for affordable housing?