

Township of South-West Oxford
Minutes
SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee
February 6, 2024

In Attendance: Mayor David Mayberry, Councillor Peter Ypma (Ward 2), Councillor Craig Gillis (Ward 6) and Paula Beckett (community representative)

Staff: Clerk Julie Middleton, Clerk’s Assistant Nicole Chambers and CBO Howard Leaver

Regrets: None

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by Mayor David Mayberry and a quorum was present.

Motion to Accept Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Peter Ypma
Seconded by Howard Leaver

RESOLVED that the agenda for the meeting of the February 6, 2024 SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee be approved, as amended.

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried

Minutes

Resolution No. 2 Moved by Howard Leaver
Seconded by Craig Gillis

RESOLVED that the minutes of the December 5, 2023 SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee meeting be approved.

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Mount Elgin Subdivision – Library Space/Layton Property

David Mayberry has been unable to connect with Kirby Heckford so far this year. He noted that the development of the Layon property has stalled due to the Ministry of the

Environment, Conservation and Parks' requirement for Oxford County to complete additional testing on cells 1 and 2 of the Mount Elgin wastewater plant, before they are able to expand the system to cells 3 and 4. Additional wells have been installed to ensure wastewater is not moving offsite. Testing will take place over six months before they are able to consider any results – they anticipate the expansion process beginning in June or July of 2024.

As a part of the testing process, Oxford County analyzed the existing capacity of cells 1 and 2. It was discovered that there is enough existing capacity for all of the houses projected for phase 6 of the Mount Elgin subdivision. As an application for subdivision has already been submitted, all projected phase 6 homes have been counted in the theoretic wastewater capacity for cells 1 and 2. Any further construction (i.e., Layton property development) may exceed the capacity and will have to wait for the results of the water testing to proceed – regardless of their construction timeline. It was noted that Brian Graydon does not expect to begin phase 6 construction until approximately one year from now. In response to a question from Peter Ypma regarding whether the observational wells are working, David Mayberry noted that they were installed about a month ago.

The Committee considered whether further discussion should take place with Mr. Graydon regarding if he has any interest in building a library in a townhouse block?

Correspondence

Market Update

The Committee reviewed the December 2023 market reported and noted the following:

- Sold listings down 3% - total of 64 units sold in 2023
- Available inventory down 68%
- New listings down 21.2%
- Average price down 19.8% - year-to-date average \$689,629

Howard Leaver noted that out of the four new permits issued in January, three were for new homes and one was for a septic permit. In the Mount Elgin subdivision, there are about 20 out of 50 lots remaining to be built. Discussion took place regarding the slow-down in the construction and renovation industries. Howard highlighted his concerns with the current housing market, and said that the price of houses is not coming down because inventory is low but we cannot seem to build the inventory up due to the high cost of materials. We need to increase the inventory, and decrease the price and interest rates to see a difference but he is unsure how to make this possible. David added that at the ROMA Conference, he heard a lot of similar comments but not a lot of solutions from other municipalities, or the provincial government.

Paula Beckett noted that although home construction has stalled, friends of hers who are contractors are busy with constructing modular homes at the four-season park in Burford. She added that these homes are in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range plus park fees and they are selling very well. Howard requested that the Committee revisit the tiny

homes discussion as we need to encourage the building of cheaper, smaller houses. He questioned how the Township and County could alter zoning by-laws to permit this, and what we can do to permit septic systems in undersized lots. Craig Gillis added that we cannot have overlapping services, and landowners may not wish to proceed with developing their land to accommodate the type of housing we are looking for.

The Committee discussed land-lease model options – how do we encourage developers to proceed with this option? One example Julie Middleton noted was Bluewater Shores in Goderich – Paula added that her cottage in Muskoka is a similar land-use model. Paula questioned if any trailer parks in the Township would be open to converting to a four-season operation? David noted that they do not have the septic capacity to operate all year, to which Julie added that their zoning does not currently permit this (but could potentially be changed).

Tiny Home Show

The Committee reviewed the “Save the Date” invitation for the 2024 Tiny Home Show, which will take place July 12-14 in Ancaster. David and Howard expressed interested in attending on the Friday together.

David noted that at the last Council Meeting, Council approved converting a temporary garden suite (approved in 2021) to a permanent additional residential unit (ARU). Howard believes that many people are constructing ARUs in their homes without contacting the Township for a permit due to a miscommunication by the province upon the initial roll-out. Julie noted she has not had a lot of calls about ARUs, but she did receive an exemption for human habitation in an RV.

Discussion took place regarding how the Township can encourage the construction of smaller homes. Howard noted that it may be useful to connect with the individual from RSM the Township previously contracted for building permit inspections before he started – he has his own tiny home business now.

The Committee discussed the confusion as to how to approach constructing an ARU in a home. If you build a new house with an ARU in mind (i.e., roughed in electrical for a fridge/stove, etc.) you must comply with Part 11 of the Building Code which requires increased safety measures. If you build a home and add an ARU in after, you fall under Part 9 of the Building Code as it would be classified as a renovation and these additional measures do not apply. Howard noted there is a technical issue with the building code and how it is written, many contractors themselves do not understand it.

David noted a previous proposal for tiny homes on a parcel in Sweaburg. At the time, this was not explored further due to the requirement for an amendment to the Official Plan, to which Council may not have supported. The Committee questioned if they would be open to revisiting this discussion. Currently, the parcel would be restricted to two ARUs outside, and one contained within the existing building. If interested, the owner could explore other options for tiny homes including a number of “slab-on-grade” units connected to one septic system. Howard noted that if any septic system processes more than 10,000 litres per day it would be out of our jurisdiction (Ministry of the

