

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Habitat for Humanity City Support Request

Motion:

That Council approve a grant to Habitat for Humanity Edmonton in the amount of \$60,000, to be funded from the Financial Stabilization Reserve, to be put towards building and development permits, and construction of water services that support the construction of 16 Habitat for Humanity duplex units within the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Purpose:

For Council to consider a grant request from Habitat for Humanity that supports the development and construction of 16 affordable housing units within the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

Background:

Habitat for Humanity is a successful, world-wide, not-for-profit organization that assists families achieve home ownership. The City of Fort Saskatchewan and Habitat for Humanity have worked together on three projects within the community.

On April 12, 2016 Council provided the balance of the Provincial Affordable Housing Grant (\$692,903 as of January 2016) to Habitat for Humanity for the purpose of purchasing land and to construct 8 duplex lots (16 total units) for the Habitat for Humanity Program within the City of Fort Saskatchewan. Since that time, Habitat for Humanity has completed the purchase of land and is actively recruiting volunteers.

As a charity organization, Habitat for Humanity's business model is built on sponsorships, donations, and volunteerism, which has become even more challenging given the economic climate currently being faced in Alberta. That said, many local companies, organizations, and individuals have stepped up and provided support for the project thus far.

In August of this year, Habitat for Humanity approached the City to request both financial and in-kind support for their project, in addition to requesting help with some minor logistical matters to support the construction process.

Of the requests made, the following are before Council for consideration at this time:

1. A request to waive all building and development permit fees charged by the City. These are fees charged by the Planning and Development Department that cover the costs of staff and contractors who approve permits and undertake compliance inspections. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$40,000.
2. A request to waive all construction water fees. These are fees charged by Infrastructure Management that cover the cost of water used during the construction process. These costs are estimated to be roughly \$20,000.

Other requests that will be considered at a later date include support from Municipal Enforcement and the RCMP, support from Infrastructure Management for supplies and equipment, support for volunteers, and advice regarding local contractors and vendors who may be able to provide assistance.

Analysis

While Habitat for Humanity is an outside organization separate from City operations, their mandate is closely aligned with many of the strategic priorities of Council and the City's Strategic Plan. Increasing the options for affordable housing within the City is a top priority, but one that presents many challenges as it requires significant support from other orders of government and significant financial resources. There are very few ways the City can tangibly move ahead with the creation of new affordable housing options without significantly increasing costs to taxpayers.

Administration supports this request given that it is in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and significantly increases our inventory of Habitat for Humanity homes within Fort Saskatchewan, which then helps to advance the pace at which new units can be constructed.

Plans/Standards/Legislation:

City of Fort Saskatchewan Strategic Plan:

- GOAL THREE – Vibrant and Thriving Community
 - 3.6 Opportunity to increase accessible and affordable housing within the community

Financial and Administrative Implications:

If Council wishes to approve support for the two requests brought forward, it would be done through the approval of a grant in the amount of \$60,000 from the Financial Stabilization Reserve. This would cover the costs associated with the request. Administration recommends against the reduction or excusal of fees whenever possible.

The current unallocated balance of the Financial Stabilization Reserve, as of September 13, 2016 is \$7,331,998.49.

Internal Impacts:

At this time there is no impact on City resources beyond the financial request put forward in this report.

File No.:

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| Approved/Reviewed by: | Troy Fleming General Manager, Infrastructure & Community Services and Acting City Manager | Date: September 2, 2016 |
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| Submitted to: | City Council | Date: September 13, 2016 |
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