Memorandum

Date: September 17, 2009

To: Stephanie Paparella, Legislative Assistant

From: Rose Caterini, Deputy Clerk / Manager, Legislative Services
      Corporate Services, City Clerks

Subject: Housing Network of Ontario Declaration

At its meeting of September 16, 2009, City Council considered the attached letter dated July 15, 2009, from the City of Kingston, regarding the above matter.

Please be advised that Council has received this correspondence and referred it to the Emergency & Community Services Committee.

Rose Caterini, B.Comm, AMCT
Deputy City Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services

RC:st
Att.
July 15, 2009

TO ALL MUNICIPALITIES WITH A POPULATION OVER 50,000

Dear Sirs:

RE: CLAUSE c), REPORT 72, KINGSTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING – JULY 14, 2009
HOUSING NETWORK OF ONTARIO DECLARATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

I would confirm that Kingston City Council at its regular meeting held on July 14, 2009, the following resolution, being Clause c), Report No. 72, was approved:

c) WHEREAS the City of Kingston endorsed the principles for a poverty reduction strategy contained in the 25-in-5 Founding Declaration, and
WHEREAS the Housing Network of Ontario is linked to the 25-in-5 Network for Poverty Reduction, and
WHEREAS the Ontario government has promised to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure everyone has "adequate, suitable and affordable housing", and
WHEREAS Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy document recognizes that all three levels of government are required to work collaboratively on the issue of adequate, suitable and affordable housing,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Kingston endorses the Housing Network of Ontario Declaration,

- and further -

THAT this resolution be forwarded to other municipalities with over 50,000 residents; Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario; Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services; and John Gerretsen, MPP for Kingston and the Islands.

CARRIED

Yours truly,

Carolyn Downs
City Clerk
We believe everyone in Ontario has the right to live poverty-free and with dignity in housing that is stable, adequate, equitably accessible and affordable.

The Government of Ontario has committed to developing a Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy.* According to the 2006 Census, 1-in-5 tenant households spend more than 50% of their income on rent, a figure that has remained constant for the past 10 years. Over 260,000 households are currently forced to make incredibly difficult choices between housing, food, clothing and other basic items that most Ontarians view as necessities.

The government must establish a housing strategy with firm targets and timelines to reduce and eventually eliminate the number of Ontarians in this situation – a strategy which meaningfully addresses the disproportionate experience of housing insecurity between different groups and communities.

Ontario’s Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy must address four priorities:

1. **The affordability of housing**, including measures to increase the supply of affordable housing and to make existing housing more affordable.
2. **The availability of affordable housing** that is stable, safe and in a state of good repair, and which effectively addresses the diversity of needs in communities across Ontario.
3. **Supports, programs and protections** that help all Ontarians equitably access and maintain adequate affordable housing and thrive in their communities.
4. **A clear way to measure progress**, with overall and population specific targets and timelines to ensure that housing insecurity and homelessness are being meaningfully reduced.

Creating and maintaining stable, equitably accessible and adequate affordable housing is good social policy. People with stable housing are healthier, more productive, do better in school, and become more engaged in their neighbourhoods. Communities become stronger, jobs are created, a more competitive economy emerges and poverty will be reduced.

**The time is now.** A comprehensive and integrated long-term affordable housing strategy will bring hope to all Ontarians, particularly those in our cities and rural communities who are most in need: including homeless people, those living in inadequate housing, Aboriginal peoples, members of racialized communities, newcomers, women, people in need of supportive housing who live with mental health issues, experience with institutionalization, criminal justice system involvement, addictions, HIV/AIDS or disabilities and others.

We call on leadership from the Province, to recognize that affordable housing is a priority in the fight to reduce poverty. By working with all orders of government and co-operating across Ministries, and with the contributions of people living on low incomes, we know that homelessness and housing insecurity can be eliminated.

*Breaking the Cycle: Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, December 2008*

The Housing Network of Ontario is a network of anti-poverty activists, homelessness and social housing advocates, equity and human rights groups, non-profit organizations, tenants with lived experience of poverty and others who are working to ensure the provincial government delivers the integrated and fully-funded affordable housing strategy our communities need. For more information and to endorse the Declaration please visit www.stableandaffordable.com. The Housing Network of Ontario is linked to the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction. For regular updates on advocacy work to push for an effective Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, go to www.25ins5.ca.