

# Regional Tripartite Housing Committee

## Minutes

March 24, 2022 (Virtual meeting)

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### Attendance:

AFNQL: Chief Lance Haymond, Guy Latouche

CMHC: Pierre Bélanger, Jean-François Samuel, François Sauvageau,

ISC: Bruce Labrador, André Dansereau, Nathalie Spénard, Pascal Dubé, Éric Bouchard (FNIHB)

Guests: François Lachance CMHC, Steve Laveau and Frédérick Martel (FNQLEDC)

### 1-Word of welcome:

Pierre Bélanger welcomes everyone. The meeting is held on Teams. The agenda is accepted as such.

### 2-Follow-ups from the last meeting:

**Action 1** : CMHC's presentation on the work of its team working with financial institutions, such as BMO or TD, related to Indigenous housing.

Considering that there is not enough precise information at this stage to know what the announcements mean concretely, this item will be on the agenda of a future meeting of the RTHC.

**Action 2** : Organize a meeting of the expanded RTHC Operations Committee (RTHC-CO) to reflect on opportunities to maximize the implementation of renovation budgets, including the Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).

CMHC's presentation on its Reno allowance today. With ISC's upcoming allocations, there is a desire for closer collaboration to maximize budgets. Discussion at a future c.o.

**Action 3**: Ensure that the results of the Skills and Capacity axis of the Regional Strategy on Housing and Infrastructure, and thus the RTHC Action Plan, are disseminated.

This action is to be followed

**Action 4**: Organize a meeting of the RTHC-CO to discuss the Regional Housing Meeting, in terms of dates, budget, logistics and content for a recommendation to the RTHC.

This meeting took place on March 15 and a recommendation will be tabled with the RTHC today.

A second preparatory meeting of the Board will take place within two weeks to discuss technical issues related to the Table.

**Action 5 :** *Call on Jean Vincent to learn more about the steps taken to expand ABSCAN's activities, and also, at the same time, about the prospects surrounding the First Nation Market Housing Fund. Done. Mr. Vincent made a presentation at the last RTHC.*

**Action 6 :** *Plan a discussion with a key stakeholder(s) in the sector to address the issue of home insurance, which remains a persistent issue.*

*There was a meeting recently at the AFN about the issue of flooding. A report will come shortly. With global warming, it will be necessary to consider that forest fires and landslides will also add to the risk. Still relevant.*

**Action 7:** *Position paper and exploration for funding for the financial literacy project presented by the FNQLEDC in association with the ABSCAN. Meeting planned quickly to move everything forward.*

**Action 8:** *See the possibility of using ISC's Info-Com newsletter as an alternative to the Housing Newsletter, Bruce Labrador will get back to us at the next meeting with more details.*

**Action 9:** *Pierre Bélanger will get back to us at the next meeting of the RTHC to report on the involvement of First Nations in the implementation of CMHC's pilot project with some twenty FNs across the country.*

### **3-National and regional environment:**

**All**

#### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Bruce Labrador provides the latest news from ISC. Luc Dumont, RDG of the Quebec Region for the past 10 years, will be leaving on April 4th for a term at Elections Canada. Caroline Garon, Associate RDG, will replace him on a 6 month interim basis. In the QC regional office, 2 management positions have been opened and will be filled in April. An opening for a 3rd position may be announced shortly.

The Quebec City office (on St-Joseph Street) is being renovated. The 3rd floor has been renovated and the 4th floor is currently being renovated.

Follow-up on items discussed at the last RTHC meeting:

- Food Insecurity Pilot Project: It was not possible to confirm funding in 2021-2022. Possibilities for 2022-2023 are being explored.
- Tender Policy Redesign: Work is still underway, and based on what is being heard in the field, the redesign is appropriate and necessary.
- Ministerial Loan Guarantees (MLG): A system change has been made to address a loophole related to the *Matrimonial Property Act*.

Discussions regarding electrification of the community of Barriere Lake are ongoing. The community prefers biomass but seems to be open to the option of a connection by Hydro-Québec. The connection for Kitcisakik will be done (at the Dozois site). If a new village is established, Hydro-Québec is also open to a connection there.

Awaiting details on the reform of the Child and Family Services program with investments of \$40 billion (\$20 billion to compensate foster parents and \$20 billion for program reform). 2 billion is planned for renovation/improvement of housing across the country, but not much detail at this time. To be continued.

It is hoped that the 2022 Federal Budget in April will allow for an enhancement of the Housing Initiative for future years. Drinking water also remains a high priority.

As a result of the Government of Canada's commitment to close the infrastructure gap by 2030, a regional approach has been developed to gather information from communities on their infrastructure needs. Many billions will be required and expectations will need to be managed.

As part of the evaluation process for three infrastructure programs (School Facilities Program, On-Reserve Housing Program, and Other Community Infrastructure and Activities Program), ISC is currently conducting community surveys to find out what is and is not working with the programs and initiatives.

There are concerns about the increased flood potential in the country while global warming is on our doorstep. Some hot areas in QC; Wolinak, Odanak, Kanasatake). A hot summer is expected and ISC is on high alert for wildfires.

COVID: Currently 560 active cases. 238 new cases recently in 6 First Nations. 10 communities still have access protocols in place. Travel is slowly resuming but it is not yet obvious. FNIHB has started travel. (PCR tests are preferred).

FNIHB is in contact with ISC regarding the anticipated flooding. By the fall of 2022, they will be fully staffed, making it easier to work to better connect with other programs.

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**

Pierre Bélanger explains that CMHC is launching a pilot project with some twenty communities across the country. The idea is to better target needs and creatively leverage all initiatives and programs to better meet those needs.

CMHC is currently working to promote access to Sec 95 for communities that do not have access to Ministerial Guarantees for reasons beyond their control. Thirty communities in Canada do not have access to this CMHC program, not because of their financial situation, but often because of their uncertain land status. In QC, Long Point FN has been allocated some Sec 95 units for the last 3 years without any Ministerial Guarantees.

CMHC is also waiting for the next federal budget. Everything indicates that it will involve significant sums of money in terms of housing and reconciliation. Following the recent NDP-Liberal agreement, it could be that a 3rd Rapid Housing Initiative will be launched soon.

Travel to communities is allowed but still very rare. The return to the MTL office is allowed but the majority of employees remain working from home. ISC indicated that its offices are available in QC to accommodate CMHC employees who would like occasional space.

## **Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)**

There was a meeting with the Bloc Québécois in early March to present housing issues in Quebec. Lot development remains an important issue when it comes to housing. Our strategy involving the axis of capacity development in the first place, then the financial issues and finally governance by First Nations was presented to a standing committee of the House of Commons.

The AFN recently held its National Housing Forum. The AFNQL made a presentation. There was recently a roundtable on skills and capabilities. The School Board was present.

There was also recently a National Forum on Water as well as a meeting on Asset Management.

Discussions have taken place with UNIFOR to further clarify the commitment they have recently made at the Grand Economic Circle. Guy Latouche had conversations with them about concrete implications to come.

In June 2022, there will be a regional meeting of the Grand Economic Circle in Mashteuiatsh.

On March 29, an important meeting will be held to define a plan on homelessness. About fifty people are registered. There will be several organizations as well as cities where there are Indigenous Friendship Centres.

## **4-Update ISC Housing Initiative**

## **ISC**

For the 2021-2024 call for proposals, ISC received a total of 59M\$ in applications from the communities while the available budget was 56M\$.

For the Housing Initiative, capacity enhancement and lot servicing were identified as priorities, in accordance with the directions taken by the RTHC.

Overview of applications:

Under construction: 30M\$

In expansion: 684k\$

In renovation: 9M\$

In lot servicing: 9.5M\$

In capacity enhancement: 8.5M\$

In innovation: 720k\$

There are also 6.9M\$ on the waiting list for building new units.

The answers will be given to the communities ideally by March 31.

## **5-Report on Housing Needs**

## **AFNQL**

The AFNQL recently produced a summary document on housing needs in Quebec. The data of each community is compared with a regional portrait. The document is more visual than the usual study and shows the evolution of needs over time since the production of the first study.

This document provides practical information on each community and supports the AFNQL during its political representations or for presentations in different forums.

### **6-Regional meeting in housing**

**All**

3 options are put on the table considering the changing context of the COVID situation in Quebec. Initially, the meeting was to be held face-to-face in Quebec City in mid-May. It seems risky to us to stick to this scenario.

The RTHC Board will meet by next week to plan the date of this meeting and to determine its format. A decision to hold a virtual day in the spring and then, if the situation allows, meeting two days face-to-face in September 2022 is the preferred option at present. The topics on the agenda, the format and all the details will be settled in the coming weeks.

### **7- Action Plan 21-23 (Axis 2)**

**FNQLEDC**

The FNQLEDC presents its Project for a Centre of Expertise in Financial Literacy and First Nations Housing. This stems from the previous study which recommended preparing the ground before going all the way with the catch-up project in the communities.

The project is done in partnership with the ABSCAN, given the common objectives of the 2 organizations in this file, and consists of raising awareness among elected officials and the population on financial tools, offering support and increasing financial knowledge to promote care and control in the housing sector.

The project is spread over a three-year horizon to begin with. It includes the design of workshops, the implementation of a Web platform and the production and distribution of content. Travel is planned and accompaniment will also take a large place. Funding will be sought from foundations and the RTHC's government partners will explore their ability to contribute to the project. The First Nations Market Housing Fund could also be a potential contributor.

### **8- Increase in construction costs**

**AFNQL**

We are seeing a significant increase in construction costs in Quebec. Governments are concerned about the difficulties caused by these increases on the implementation of projects pending or slowed down by the health situation or the impact on recently accepted projects. There is not much planned to counter this situation but it seems essential to us to document everything so that the various government authorities can take this issue into account in their subsequent financing towards Housing.

### **9-Housing Newsletter– Discussion**

**All**

Discussion on the continuity of the production of the Housing Newsletter. Given that we now have tools (COPH for example) to get information to communities efficiently and quickly, perhaps it is

no longer as appropriate to publish the newsletter on an annual basis. ISC mentioned that its Info-Com newsletter, which it sends to communities on a regular basis, could be used by the RTHC for a variety of purposes. We explore ways to transmit useful information to everyone (e.g. the different allowances). A decision will be made at the next meeting when we know more about info-Com.

#### **10-Varia and next meeting**

**All**

When the next regional meeting is scheduled, we will decide on the date of the next RTHC meeting.

#### **11-End of the meeting**