

Michael Dawe - Affordable housing

This is one of the key issues in our community.

I like a number of the initiatives that have been adopted to address these concerns in Red Deer. I also have some experience, having served a five year term on the Red Deer Housing Authority.

Sometimes the details create problems.

Basement suites and other types of ancillary housing help provide good affordable housing options.

And a municipality needs to ensure these suites are safe and fit for tenants.

There were problems when arbitrary caps were put on the numbers of suites in certain neighborhoods (e.g. some people spent quite a bit of money to ensure safe clean accommodations, only to be told that they could still not rent out the suites as the "cap" for that neighbourhood had been reached)

In my own personal experience, I was told we would have to evict a tenant from an existing legal suite until a sprinkler system was installed.

Fortunately, the fire inspector intervened, said that was not in fact what the regulations required and that the tenant could stay while the sprinkler system was installed on the premises (done almost immediately once all the specifications and details were worked out).

I was unhappy when the Aboriginal Centre was blocked, even though the site had been identified before the new nearby housing had been constructed and the centre met all the zoning requirements.

I hope the new site works, but historically, that site has been subject to river flooding. This is not in the distant past. We came very close to flooding across those flats in 2005.

Nevertheless, I believe there is a role for legitimate and well organized community consultations.

I support the use of emergency shelters in our community, provided they are placed in appropriate locations and meet building code requirements (shelters should not be put in locations where there are safety concerns).

I support the renewal of the 5 year plan to end homelessness. It is hard to say more without viewing the results of the renewal reports to determine what works, what didn't work and what new approaches are needed.