

Council Meeting Record 2022-2026

A summary of Candidate Stances on Renter Issues, and
Contextual Information

A Note on the Tiny Homes Project (Transitional Housing)

- Despite news coverage on this project, this development is being done by BC Housing and not the City
- Due to rules in the Official Community Plan (created before this council), this project did not require any re-zoning or approval from the city to go forward
- The City has been providing information on the project, but to this volunteer's knowledge does not have a way of controlling this project, so it is not included in the voting record



More Context - Density and Infrastructure

- The city plans out population growth over time in something called the Official Community Plan. [New West's plan can be found here](#), and is planned up until 2041. The current OCP was created during the term of the previous city council, which Johnstone and McEvoy were on as councillors.
- This includes planning for building more infrastructure and amenities over time to keep up with population growth
- Making the OCP involves consulting with multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to the public, school board, translink, fraser health, the province, neighbouring cities, and experts who can do things like ecological surveys

More Context - Density and Infrastructure

- If a developer builds something on a spot that isn't zoned for a tall building, but the density it adds to the neighbourhood is within what the city planned for, then it just requires rezoning
- If a developer wants to build a big building that would add more density than planned for to the neighbourhood, then it requires an amendment to the official community plan, which is a much more involved process
- The city typically requires the developer to help pay for or build amenities and infrastructure in the area eg. Child care facilities, parks, public art.
- Usually also require developers to build things like sidewalks around the building.
- The province also wants cities to be denser, so it provides grants for improving infrastructure that either require the city to build more housing before being considered for the grant, or to build it as part of receiving the grant

Example: Bosa Tower helped pay for West Pier Park



In Summary: It is unusual for cities to build infrastructure first and density second, they typically happen at the same time.

You *could* argue that there is a problem with the Official Community Plan, but this plan was created more than 4 years ago. The NWTU doesn't have a stance on the OCP.

Patrick Johnstone

- In council since 2014
- Mayor since 2022
- Community First Party, running for Mayor
- Frequently explains procedure and technical details of projects to council, this has not been included in this shortened summary but can be seen in the full report
- Votes with other CF councilors



Johnstone Stances on Renter's Issues 2023

- May 29 2023, page 34 - Spoke in favor of continuing to fund rent bank, talked about how the city starting its own rent bank shamed the province into providing funding for it, and creating a provincial rent bank program, and now the province funds more than the city does.
- June 12 2023, page 22 - Argued against Fontaine's proposal for not meeting housing targets to see if city could get more funding, provided context for what being on the list of cities not meeting targets might mean and what the city currently knows and does not know
- June 12 2023, page 24- Supported looking into utility relief for low income New West residents with air conditioning bills, but provided some estimates on the cost of Fontaine's proposal that would be much more expensive than the presented estimate, which he felt was not within the city's budget. Also had concerns about landlords banning air conditioners. Wanted to look into additional cooling measures the city could take

Johnstone Stances on Renter's Issues 2023

- June 26 2023, page 25 - Brought back to council meeting with utility commission, which decided giving out air conditioners wasn't the best use of resources, but planned to gather more information to determine best approach. Identified wanting to speed up heat protection work the city is doing, but also keep working on climate change goals to avoid making problem worse.
- July 10, 2023, page 28 - Stated importance of city going beyond province in providing cooling support for residents, as city can move faster and New West is a particularly vulnerable city
- August 28 2023, page 29 - Spoke in favor of cooling bylaw stating New West has been a leader in protecting renters when RTB does not. Providing incentives for landlords to provide cooling has taken us as far as it can. People who own housing and earn money from it, have a responsibility to make that housing safe.
- September 11 2023, page 28 - Expresses support for accelerating climate action plan including putting in more cooling supports, and hiring more staff to speed up program delivery

Johnstone Stances on Renter's Issues 2024

- June 10 2024, page 1 - Supports TRP and highlights importance of city providing tenant protections
- July 8 2024, page 31 - Disagrees with Fontaine on waiting to see if province will put in cooling protections, votes to tell city staff to start working on bylaw strategy

Johnstone Stances on Renter's Issues 2025

- March 24 2025, page 3 - Supports TRP. Wants more information on suite size impacts before making a decision. Highlights need to figure out what city can legally do around renter payouts, and that different tenants might have different needs. States TRP might make these buildings less attractive for redevelopment and that's fine, redevelopment can happen elsewhere.
- May 12 2025, page 32 - Argues against Fontaines suggestion that additional staff should not be hired for cooling bylaw enforcement and other climate action work unless other city staff positions are reduced
- July 7 2025, page 6 - Does not want to shift public hearing dates on housing accelerator fund project at risk of jeopardizing funding

Johnstone Stances on Renter Issues - 2026

- January 26 2026, page 7 - Stated that the market is not going to build more affordable housing, the government has to build it. Talked about importance of city making it easier to build affordable housing in New West.
- June 22 2026, page 13 - Clarified to council that Royal Towers project was making existing affordable housing more stable long term, not adding more affordable units to Newt West. Emphasized importance of city funding small amounts of affordable housing projects to incentivize the province to build more in the city. Stated this was important alongside infrastructure improvements.

Daniel Fontaine

- In council since 2022
- New Westminster Progressives Party, Running for Mayor
- Frequently speaks in council
- Rarely votes differently than Councilor Minhas
- Votes reasonably often in favor of renters issues, but usually tries to introduce amendments or expresses dissatisfaction with motions before they pass
- Frequently repeats concerns around New Westminster becoming more dense
- Frequently states he feels paying for affordable housing is the provinces job, and the city should not be putting money towards it



Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues 2023

- January 9 2023, page 21 - Fontaine and Minhas introduced idea of creating a preapproved housing designs “bank” to streamline housing development, Henderson stated this might not work in New West because we don't have standard lots in the way other cities do, McEvoy suggested moving this to the housing committee to look into it more and see if it works with the city's other affordable housing strategies, Fontaine and Minhas opposed this as he wanted the housing bank to be implemented ASAP.
- April 24 2023, page 22 - Voted unanimously with rest of council to approve rezoning on Agnes street for building that would add 352 units of market rental housing

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2023

- June 12 2023, page 22 - Wanted to talk with council about deliberately not meeting provincial housing targets to see if the province would then give the city more housing funding.
- May 8 2023, page 23 - Had many concerns about transitional housing Purpose wants to build, including if the building should be used for residential housing, if it means there won't be enough spaces for businesses in the city, if the city will get less property taxes and this will set a precedent long term for the city getting less taxes from many buildings, if there has been enough public consultation, and if people living in New West will be prioritized for the transitional housing. Staff were able to address the majority of these concerns (see full report).

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2023

- May 29 2023, page 34- Argued that province should be funding rent banks and not the city, and that the 35,000 dollars of funding the city provides the rent bank should be spent on programs like the May Day festival instead. Stated he does not think rent bank should be paying staff to help renters who do not qualify for a loan find other programs, and that non profits in the community should do this instead
- June 12 2023, page 24 - Fontaine proposes city use 500,000 dollars of the climate action fund to buy low income renters an air conditioner and provide them with a 500 dollar utility rebate during the summer. Opposed any delay in implementing this motion, arguing renters need protection from heat

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2023

- June 26 2023, page 25 - Voted in favor of alternate accelerated heat protection plan that city came back with
- August 28 2023, page 29 - Suggested amendment to Nakagawa and Henderson's cooling motion, suggesting province provide direct or indirect incentives to landlords to support retrofitting buildings. Expressed concern about this "all being on landlords" and that landlords will eventually pass on costs to renters. Also concerned about bylaw triggering renovictions. Voted in favor of motion after his amendment was defeated, but stated he did not feel it was a good bylaw.
- September 11 2023, page 28 - Raised issue with accelerated heat protection plan, did not like that it increased city spending to hire more staff, said this should be part of budget conversations in the fall (however vote was to include in budget in fall). Voted against the plan.

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2024

- April 22 2024, page 20 - Expressed concern that rezoning building did not require consulting with school board, parking around building, and trees that would be removed. Also asked about why building did not meet inclusionary housing requirements (developer started process before new bylaw went in, project has fewer affordable units, but they are deeply affordable and for families)
- June 10 2024, page 1 - Wanted impact on landlords to be considered in Tenant Relocation Policy, stating it is important because they will be the ones building more housing in the future. Otherwise voted in favor of TRP
- July 8 2024, page 35 - Voted in favor of writing a letter to province asking for expansion/redesign of Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2024

- July 8 2024, page 15 - Voted against non profit housing development for youth and mothers, stating he felt the location would lead to properties around it not being properly developed. Argued those properties could theoretically be made into even bigger affordable housing projects in the future.
- July 8 2024, page 31 - Opposes suggestion by Nakagawa that city staff should start exploring making a cooling bylaw. States city should wait and see if provincial election results in the province putting in a law instead. Votes for city cooling plan continuing but against creating cooling protection bylaw.
- October 21 and 28 2024, page 16 - Votes against Columbia Square development concerns around density and city lacking infrastructure to support it. As part of discussion argues affordable housing is provinces responsibility, not city.

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2025

- January 27 2025, page 17 - Votes in favor of adding more affordable housing requirements to Columbia Square Project, although is against the development overall. Restates density funding should go to amenities and not affordable housing
- March 24 2025, page 3 - Wanted to expand amendment suggesting bigger payouts in TRP to include all low income people, from Campbell's suggestion of seniors and people with disabilities.
- March 24 2025 and December 1 2025, pages 3 and 5 - Mixed opposition to TRP having equivalent units in size and rooms, versus offering bigger unit with more bedrooms. Initially supports not doing analysis and making units equivalent size, after analysis switches vote to offering more bedrooms.

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2025

- May 12 2025, page 32 - argues that property taxes have been raised too high recently and that the motion's recommendation that the city add three full-time positions for tenant-related enforcement and life safety work around cooling should only be approved if it can be at the reduction of other city staff positions.

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2025

- June 23 2025, page 33 - Wants to amend cooling protection bylaw for renters to also require the province to put air conditioners into school portables. Other councillors vote against this amendment, saying it isn't related enough to residential cooling requirements and should be its own bylaw.
- June 23 2025, page 11 - Stated he does not feel money from Royal Towers project should go towards affordable housing, and instead should go towards other public amenities like parks in the downtown. Stated housing should be province's job. Did vote in favor of rezoning for Royal Towers despite concerns around it adding density and which residents associations were consulted.

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2026

- January 26, 2026, page 7 - Wants city to refuse to put in provincially mandated TOD zones, and instead have the province overrule the city and put in their own laws.
- January 26, 2026, page 9 - Did not support building more townhomes, felt it is adding too much density, there is not enough infrastructure to support it. Also did not think townhomes would be an affordable option for most people to buy or rent. Also felt it would negatively impact property taxes of home owners in rezoned areas.
- February 23 2026, page 34 - Voted with rest of council to do pilot project with 10 older buildings to retrofit with cooling measures

Fontaine Stances on Renter's Issues - 2026

- March 30 2026, page 33 - Votes in favor of cooling bylaw being for one room and staffing a renters office
- April 27 2026, page 33 - Proposes cooling bylaw should be in afternoon as well and start in April, asks staff to look into this. Staff said they could figure that out for 2027 at the earliest.
- June 22 2026, page 13 - Tried to amend motion to require Royal Tower's density funding be used for non-housing infrastructure projects in the downtown neighbourhood only. Amended to include brow of the hill neighbourhood when other members of council pointed out the development is in brow of the hill. Voted for changing wording to prevent density funding being used to pay for affordable housing, but was defeated by other councillors

Paul Minhas

- In council since 2022
- Running with the New Westminster Progressives Party
- Rarely speaks on tenant related issues
- Rarely votes differently than Councilor Fontaine
- Owns property and lives in downtown area, so did not vote on bylaws related to Transit Oriented Development areas due to conflict of interest requiring him to recuse himself



Minhas Stances on Renter's Issues

- January 9 2023, page 21 - Fontaine and Minhas introduced idea of creating a preapproved housing designs “bank” to streamline housing development, Henderson stated this might not work in New West because we don’t have standard lots in the way other cities do, McEvoy suggested moving this to the housing committee to look into it more and see if it works with the city’s other affordable housing strategies, Fontaine and Minhas opposed this as he wanted the housing bank to be implemented ASAP.
- April 24 2023, page 22 - Proposed public hearing should be held for redevelopment on Agnes street that would build 352 market rental units, but voted to approve it without public hearing after discussion.

Minhas Stances on Renter's Issues

July 8 2024, page 15 - Opposes building non-profit housing project for youth and mothers, citing concerns that it will lead to “orphan” properties, giving examples of places in downtown that have been abandoned by the developer.

October 21 2024, page 16 - Opposed Columbia square development due to concerns about increasing density in the area without first building more infrastructure

Minhas Stances on Renter's Issues

January 26 2026, page 9 - Opposed building townhouses in New West and said new housing should not be build before more infrastructure such as a new highschool is built. Expressed feeling New West is too dense and that increasing density does not increase affordability

March 30 2026, page 18 - Voted in favor of Sangster project application, against City Staff recommendations as (due to the specific context of the project, see full report) this would essentially mean the developer could build a large tower without having to pay for any infrastructure or amenities in the city

June 22 2026, page 13 - In regards to Royal Towers density funding, said it did not matter what neighbourhood the funding went to, so long as the funding was to build more infrastructure and not more affordable housing, as Royal Towers is maintaining existing affordable housing as part of the project.

Tasha Henderson

- In council since 2022
- Community First Party
- Did not vote on TOD zoning bylaws, as has conflict of interest in that area so was recused
- Votes with other CF councilors, with the exception of the Columbia Square redevelopment, voted against because of lack of affordable housing
- Initiated the cooling bylaw to prevent air conditioners from being banned and require landlords to keep at least one room in a rental below a certain temperature overnight



Henderson Stances on Renter Issues - 2023

- January 9 2023, page 21 - Expressed interest in Fontaine and Minhas' motion to create pre-approved building plans for lane housing development, but identified this would be very hard to implement in New West because we lack standard lot sizes and the city is old so we don't know much about soil composition and other things under existing buildings that would impact what structures you can build on it. Had other concerns about logistics of this plan.
- July 10 2023, page 27 - Supports accelerating heat protection plan and the city buying air conditioners for vulnerable residents, in conjunction with provincial BC Hydro plan being rolled out

Henderson Stances on Renter Issues - 2023

- August 28, 2023, page 29 - With Nakagawa, created motion that eventually became cooling bylaw in 2026. Stated people deserve livable housing, and feels this is about equity for renters. Stated cities already regulate heating so should regulate cooling as well. Stated landlords should be responsible for figuring out these costs as they are running a business, and this is a business expense. Included recommendations from NTWU to make sure that doing things like installing heat pumps could not trigger renovictions. Didn't support amendments adding considerations for landlords, wanted to keep focus on tenants.

Henderson Stances on Renter Issues - 2024

- May 24 2024, page 15 - Does not support Columbia Square redevelopment because it does not include affordable housing. Feels affordable housing should be mix in with market and not segregated elsewhere. Voted against development application.
- June 10 2024, page 1 - Supports TRP, highlights New West renovation policy setting the standard in Canada and TRP could do the same. Notes NTWU is in support of a policy inspired by Burnaby
- October 21 2024, page 16 - Involved in discussions on how amendments to rezoning motion could require Columbia Square redevelopment to include affordable housing.

Henderson Stances on Renter Issues - 2025

- May 12 2025, page 32 - Supports hiring additional staff to enforce cooling bylaw, frame as larger part of working with tenants
- May 24 2025, page 15 - Wants to investigate if TRP resulting in equivalent unit sizes would cause market rent units in those buildings to have much higher rent (floors in towers have to have the same suite layouts to make development feasible)
- June 23 2025, page 33 - Did not support expanding cooling bylaw from focus on residential tenancy situations to include requesting province put air conditioners in school portables.
- October 6 2025, page 35 - Brings motion to have council write letter to province requesting they continue funding for the Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease Program (supporting homeless seniors), and advocate for continuing the program at the UBCM

Henderson Stances on Renter Issues - 2026

- January 26 2026, page 7 - Supports townhouse development, had questions on how staff decided where to rezone for townhouses. Felt zoning for townhouses adds choice for renters and owners in community.
- March 30 2026, page 18 - Tries to find work around to be able to approve Sangster project, eventually determines city staff are correct and problem with project cannot be resolved at this time and votes to reject development application.
- June 22 2026, page 13 - Supports some density funding from Royal Towers project being used for affordable housing, stated there would still be ample funding left over to build other amenities. Also stated downtown is getting a community center prioritized and the city has had a high success rate getting grants to pay for infrastructure, so feels spending some of the density funding on affordable housing is reasonable

Jaime McEvoy

- In council since 2022
- Community First Party
- Frequently speaks about renter protections and renters rights
- Does not put forward a lot of motions for renters but votes in support of most motions that are put forward
- Had a heart attack in 2024 and was out of office from Feb. until Sept. 2024



McEvoy Stances on Renter's Issues

- January 9 2023, page 21 - Fontaine and Minhas propose system for speeding up laneway house and other housing development. McEvoy suggests exploring this with housing task force to align with existing city affordable housing strategies
- April 24 2023, page 22 - Voted unanimously with rest of council to approve rezoning on Agnes street for building that would add 352 units of market rental housing
- May 8 2023, page 23 - Supports rezoning to allow Purpose to build transitional housing at 422 Sixth Street, noting $\frac{2}{3}$ of homeless people in New West had their last address here
- May 29 2023, page 34 - Spoke in favor of continuing funding to Rent Bank, highlighted importance of rent banks

McEvoy Stances on Renter's Issues

- June 12 2023, page 24 - Suggested referring Fontaine's motion to buy air conditioners for renters to electrical utility, stating need for costing, resolving landlords banning air conditioners, and determining if buildings can handle electrical load. Stated did want to see if program was feasible.
- June 26th 2023, page 25 - Suggested exploring if city can make cooling a right for renters, and require landlords to check on renters during heatwaves. Wanted to make sure renters can take pets to cooling shelters.
- August 28th 2023, page 29 - Spoke in favor of bylaw to prevent landlords banning air conditioners in rental buildings
- October 21 2024, page 16 - Expresses concerns about Columbia Square redevelopment not having affordable housing

McEvoy Stances on Renter's Issues

- March 24 2025, page 3
 - Supported Tenant Relocation Policy, but had concerns about increasing payouts to seniors and people with disabilities; worried large amounts of money are hard to resist but are not in renters long term best interests
 - Stated developers making a profit should be the ones covering costs to community of development, not tenants
 - Highlighted importance of pet relocation in TRP (And on December 1 2025)
- June 23 2025, page 11
 - Royal Towers Redevelopment (building replacement housing for tenants and a new condo tower) - Said Royal Towers tenants and the NWTU need to be consulted. Wants project to go ahead because he feels it is valuable.

McEvoy Stances on Renter's Issues

- Jan 26 2026, page 7
 - Status quo on affordable housing is not working, and if province is going to force TOD zones, then city has responsibility to make sure it is implemented in a way that is good for New West residents
 - In support of city zoning for more townhomes, see's it as a thoughtful way of introducing provincially mandated density to city
- June 22 2026, page 13 - Supported using some density funding from Royal Towers Redevelopment to build more affordable housing in New West. Stated he felt it is important for the municipality to fund housing.

More Context - Cooling Bylaw Proposals

- City council in 2023 was exploring measures that could be taken for renters to prevent another tragedy after the 2021 heat dome
- Fontaine proposed the City use 500,000 dollars of the climate action fund to buy low income renters an air conditioner and provide them with a 500 dollar utility rebate during the summer
 - Johnstone pointed out that at the income cut off Fontaine proposed, 96,000 households in New West would qualify, so at 1000 for each household, the program would need 9.5 million dollars, which is about 15% of the electrical utility's budget. Johnstone did feel utility rebates were a good idea that should be explored but it would need to be costed
 - McEvoy suggested referring to electrical utility to figure out costing and what the city could potentially do
 - Fontaine felt the program should not be costed, that it was cheaper than Johnstone was saying, and that it should not be delayed by talking to the electric utility

More Context - Cooling Bylaw Proposals

- Electrical utility came back next meeting and said they would need time to figure out how to deliver air conditioners to most vulnerable people (how to find and distribute) and stay in budget
- Identified where they can accelerate existing heat protections work plan and what budget increases would be needed.
- Council eventually approved a more limited plan to give air conditioners to seniors and other vulnerable people already identified as needing them by Fraser Health or Seniors Services Society
- Henderson and Nakagawa introduce a motion to require landlords to keep at least one room in an apartment below 26 degrees celsius overnight, eventually becomes a bylaw in 2026

More Context - TOD Laws

- The province has legally required cities to put in Transit Oriented Development zones
- Argument in council is around if city should do this, or if they should refuse to and then the province will overrule the city
- Fontaine stated the city is too dense and they do not want to be part of putting in more density, so voted to refuse to put the laws in.
- Johnstone, McEvoy argued this means the city has less control over implementing the laws in a way that works best for the city, and that it would be irresponsible to not try and use the tools they do have to make the implementation better for New West. Voted to put the laws in, along with Campbell and Nakagawa.
- Henderson and Minhas did not vote on this issue because they live or own property in the TOD zones

More Context - TRP Discussions

- November 2023 - Provincial Government introduces Transit Oriented Development Areas
 - Results in many 3 story walkups housing low income renters being automatically rezoned so that they can become 8 or 20 story buildings
 - Creates risk of many low income people being evicted to redevelop these buildings
- In 2020 Burnaby made a Tenant Relocation Policy to require developers to
 - provide tenants who are being displaced with a place to live at the same rent while the building is being rebuilt,
 - and first right of refusal to an equivalent apartment at the same rent in the new building

More Context - TRP Discussions

- June 10 2024 - Campbell (CF) and Nakagawa (Ind) Introduce what will eventually become the Newt West Tenant Relocation Policy (TRP)
 - Fontaine attempted to amend policy to place emphasis on “evidence based policy” that provides data on how policy will impact both tenants and landlords.
 - Stated after pushback that it was important to consider landlords as they will support property development in the future.
 - Amendment was defeated with CF and Nakagawa opposed.
 - Fontaine then votes to pass motion without amendment, saying it is “better than nothing”. Minhas votes with Fontaine but does not speak.
 - Henderson and Mayor speak at this meeting about importance of protecting tenants

More Context - TRP Discussions

- March 24 2025 and December 1st 2025 - Conversation about TRP
 - Henderson raises issue of suite size equivalency in TRP
 - Older units have bigger suites, and for efficiency reasons you can't build an apartment building different sized suites.
 - Concerned building of big suites = higher average rent
 - Proposes investigating offering people suites with more rooms instead
 - Fontaine doesn't think analysis needs to be done around suite size, suggests tenants should just be given bigger suites. Henderson argues this would be good for TRP renters but potentially bad for renters moving into community
 - Staff come back after doing analysis, after discussion about there not being perfect option, unanimously vote for Henderson's initial suggestion

More Context - TRP Discussions

- March 24 2025 - Conversation about TRP
 - Campbell suggests seniors and people with disabilities should get higher payouts under TRP if they leave, Fontaine wants to expand this further to include more people (gave example of youths)
 - McEvoy expresses concern about offering people payouts as its hard to resist big amounts of money but it isn't usually in people's long term interest, votes against this amendment
 - Johnstone highlights different tenants have different needs, votes with this amendment