

Balanced Tenant Protection Policies that Work

Balanced tenant protection policies that work

Interactive workshop | UBCM 2026

Protect people. Enable housing.
Build trust.

**Sommerville
Community
Relations**

**bosa
properties**



Today is not a traditional panel

We are going to test real tenant relocation policy trade-offs and focus on real solutions, **together**.

TEST

Spot a well-intended policy that may create an avoidable problem.

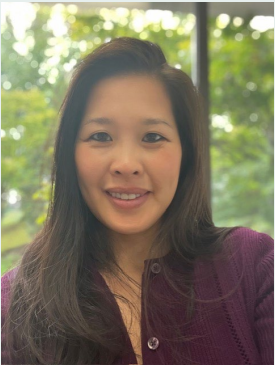
DECIDE

Act as council on a fictional redevelopment with no easy answer.

APPLY

Leave with a practical framework for balancing people, housing and trust.

Four perspectives in the room



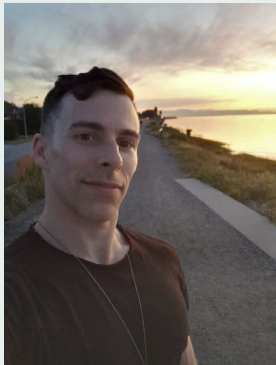
Wendy Tse
City of Burnaby

Municipal policy design,
implementation and political
durability



Dea Knight
Bosa Properties Inc.

Development feasibility,
predictability and operational
consequences



Matthew Thiesen
Sommerville

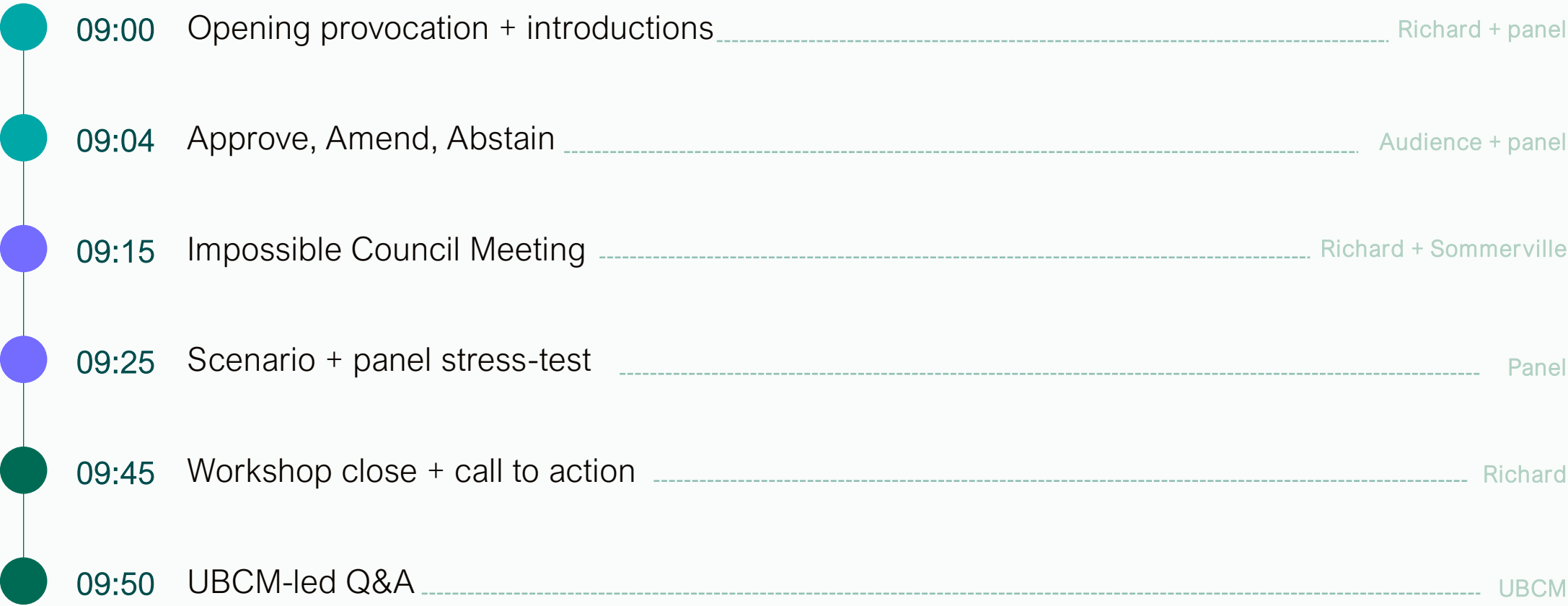
Tenant experience, relocation
delivery and collaborative
liaison models

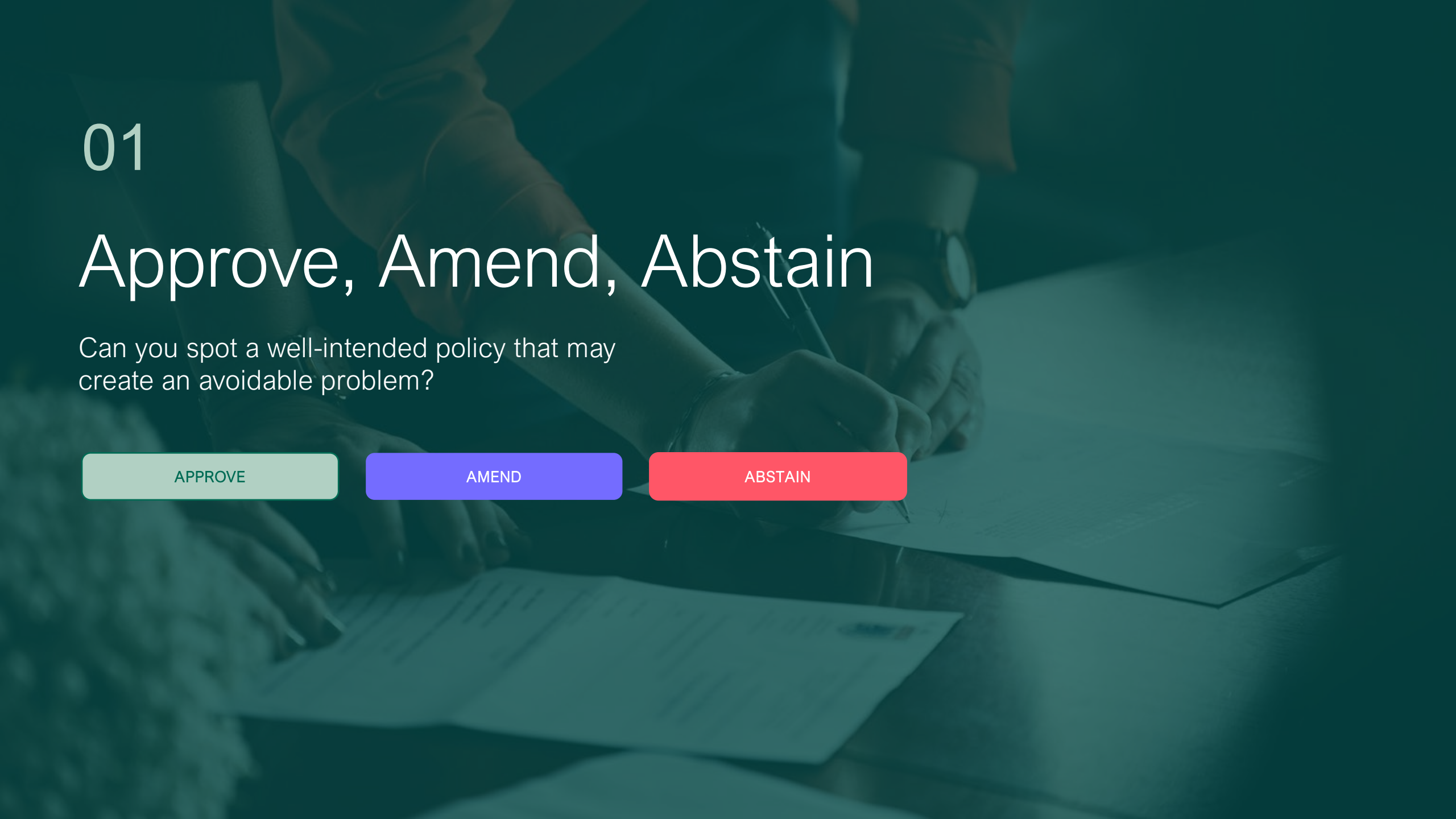


Richard Zussman
Moderator

Neutral guide who surfaces
trade-offs and protects pace

How the session will unfold:





01

Approve, Amend, Abstain

Can you spot a well-intended policy that may create an avoidable problem?

APPROVE

AMEND

ABSTAIN

How to play

01

Read

Review the policy statement on screen.

02

Vote

Hold up green to approve, white to amend or red to abstain.

03

Listen

Each speaker gives a concise response.

04

Improve

Identify the practical adjustment that would make the policy work better.

Policy statement 1

The developer determines the form of moving compensation, either cash or paid movers. Tenants may express a preference.

APPROVE

AMEND

ABSTAIN

Vote first. Then hear the practical implications.

IMPLEMENTATION WATCH-OUT
There is no municipal selection form or tracking of these decisions for permit approval.

Policy statement 2

Affordable housing must be found for displaced tenants, regardless of whether the tenant successfully registers through BC Housing.

APPROVE

AMEND

ABSTAIN

Vote first. Then hear the practical implications.

Policy statement 3

Right of First Refusal must meet family-size requirements under National Occupancy Standards.

APPROVE

AMEND

ABSTAIN

Vote first. Then hear the practical implications.

IMPLEMENTATION WATCH-OUT

Tenants can only move back if an appropriately sized unit is offered and approved. A family of six, for example, would require a three-bedroom unit.

02

The Impossible Council Meeting

Can council protect current tenants, keep housing moving and maintain public confidence?

What we are trying to achieve

01

Surface

Show the real trade-offs council faces when no option is clean.

02

Pressure-test

Put tenant protection, housing supply and public trust in tension.

03

Reveal

Expose how process, detail and intent must work together to decide the outcome.

04

Equip

Leave with judgment you can apply to your own council table.

The file before council

THE SITE

An old, poorly managed market-rental building with 35 units. Most tenants are low-income or seniors.

THE PROPOSAL

A non-profit housing provider purchased the site and a local developer is hired to propose a purpose-built non-market rental tower with 100% income-tested units, approx. 140 units.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Social housing up to 20 storeys is permitted. The tenants in the building have been given the option to participate in a survey with the intention of providing better insight into their individual circumstances and future housing needs should the project go ahead.

The promise: new affordable housing enters the pipeline.
The consequence: **some** current tenants may be permanently displaced.

The tenant reality is not clean-cut

WHAT THE SURVEY SAYS

- **75%** of tenants responded.
- **15** households self-identified as low-income.
- Income status was not verified.

WHAT ELIGIBILITY SAYS

- Many households appear to be lower-income, but do not meet the policy threshold.
- Many do not qualify for the new building.

Council must choose

Approve the project to create 140 new affordable housing units, knowing the policy approach could leave ~50% of current tenants permanently displaced.

APPROVE

Move the project forward

APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Change what matters most

REJECT

Do not accept the trade-off

Vote now, then hear perspectives

Stress-test the decision

WENDY

What municipal objective must the policy protect?

What can the city actually administer?

DEA

What changes project feasibility or predictability?

Where could the policy stop housing from moving?

MATTHEW

What does the relocation process mean for tenants?

Where can liaison and trust change the outcome?

RICHARD

Which trade-off are we avoiding?

What assumption needs to be challenged?

Balanced policy is not about choosing tenants or housing.

It is about protecting people and communities, enabling housing and building trust through a process that works in the real world.

Before you draft or update a policy **or bylaw**, ask:

Is it clear? Is it workable? Who could be left behind?

Is the intent compensation-oriented or affordability-based?

NEXT: Q&A

The background of the slide is a photograph of a city at night, likely Vancouver, with a dense residential area in the foreground and mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a dark teal gradient. The text is white and positioned in the upper left quadrant.

03

UBCM-led Q&A

Open the floor. UBCM facilitates questions from the room.



COMMON GOOD

UBCM
2026



The Rural Coordination Centre of BC

In appreciation of our speakers today and with thanks for your contribution, UBCM has made a donation to the Rural Coordination Centre of BC. Since their inception in 2007, RCCBC has grown into a network of hundreds of people - rural physicians and other healthcare providers, healthcare administrators, community members, policymakers, educators, researchers, and non-profit and business leaders – guided by the principles of cultural safety and humility.