

## Community housing board backs plan to sell 700 homes across Toronto

DAVID NICKLE

October 21, 2011

A plan to sell off 700 units of housing scattered across the city passed its first hurdle Friday, Oct. 21, as the Toronto Community Housing Corporation voted overwhelmingly to proceed with the plan.

The sell-off has been in the works for months - since shortly after Mayor Rob Ford and Toronto City Council fired the board of directors of the housing corporation and placed former councillor Case Ootes in charge of it.

Just before Ootes handed off controls of TCHC to the new, council-appointed board of directors, he said that the board should consider selling off its so-called "scattered housing" - single family homes scattered through neighbourhoods across the city - to help pay for a \$650-million repair backlog elsewhere in the housing portfolio.

On Friday, the new board did just that - first hearing from 45 members of the public, including some tenants, and some city councillors. The deputations all urged the board to back off the plan.

"We're talking about hurting families and destroying homes," said Scarborough-Rouge River Councillor Raymond Cho. "Defer the whole thing for six months and make deputations in Ottawa. If not, the public will perceive this board as a 'puppet board.'"

Councillor Paula Fletcher, who represents Toronto-Danforth, agreed with Cho, pointing out that it appeared as though the plan was a "done deal", and that the board was simply doing Mayor Ford's bidding.

"The message to tenants is that these homes are worth a lot and you aren't worth being in them."

The board also heard from a number of tenants - some of whom were fearful that they would lose their homes in neighbourhoods where their children are attending school.

"This is my family that is going to be evicted," said Cassie Bond, showing photographs of her children. "Prior to moving into this home I was living in a complex where my family was in danger. I was forced to leave there. I found a safe place to live in a stand-alone unit. Now my family's safety is at risk."

According to TCHC staff, tenants who are eventually displaced will be guaranteed housing that fits their



**Community housing board backs plan to sell 700 homes across Toronto.** Homes on Lowry Square are on the list of properties proposed for sale by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. *File photo/TORONTO COMMUNITY NEW*

criteria - and if that housing isn't available, then the house they're in won't be sold. But there would be no guarantee as to where that housing would be located.

The money from the sale would go into an investment fund that would help dig into the state of good repair backlog on other units.

Trinity-Spadina Councillor Adam Vaughan said that the TCHC should look at ways to deal with that backlog other than displacing tenants.

"This issue of selling scattered units makes no sense," he said. "You don't see the police selling stations to repair other stations; you don't see the TTC selling buses to repair track; you don't see the library selling books to repair shelves."

The plan has a long way to go before it can be put into effect.

It still must receive approval from Toronto's executive committee and council, and it must also receive approval from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. If that approval is granted, the company will start with 70 units that are in such disrepair that they are currently sitting vacant.

---

**This article is for personal use only courtesy of InsideToronto.com - a division of Metroland Media Group Ltd.**

---