WE'RE NOT FOR $ALE
Tenants for Social Housing

April 10, 2012

Dear Councillor Bailao,

Tenants for Social Housing is sending this letter of thanks for your intervention on the mass sale of Toronto Community Housing single dwelling homes earlier this year. In principle, we are supportive of one of the outcomes of the March 5/6, 2012 City Council meetings - the creation of an objective Affordable Housing Committee Special Working Group whose mandate is to address the capital repair backlog and to find the real solutions to the real problems that are facing tenants and Toronto Community Housing. As we know you will agree, any such objective Group should have extensive tenant engagement in their consultations and deliberations.

While there is support for the Affordable Housing Committee Special Working Group (SWG) in principle, Tenants for Social Housing has concerns with the announcement and media release issued recently.

We are greatly disappointed in the composition of the SWG, and specifically with the appointment of the TCHC Board Chair, Bud Purves. To our knowledge, Mr. Purves is serving as a representative of TCHC on the SWG. He is the Chair of the Board of Directors of TCHC and in his first major decision as Chair, Mr. Purves brought forward a report to implement a mass sell-off of social housing without notifying the tenants living in the identified homes. Mr. Purves also has a stated position in favour of the sale of TCHC's single dwelling homes that he has shared on numerous occasions in the media.

To remain an objective SWG, with a consultation process that is honest and transparent and that tenants trust, Tenants for Social Housing request that Mr. Purves be replaced on the SWG by an objective person that is more flexible, unbiased, and with the skills and experience in understanding the importance of social housing and the real, lived experiences of tenants.

Additionally, there is no tenant representation on the SWG, and no one that we can identify who has a base rooted firmly in tenant engagement. The media release and coverage on the Affordable Housing Committee website does not give a clear impression of being proactive about engaging tenants, other than sending out a survey to tenants living in the single dwelling homes. This assumes that only a select number of tenants will be engaged in a limited structure, without the opportunity for discussion or conversation.

As an active and engaged volunteer tenant organization in Toronto that is determined to ensure that the needs of tenants are at the centre of thought and decision-making, including the preservation and protection of mixed social housing types and

TENANTS FOR SOCIALHOUSING
416-604-5900
socialhousingtenants@gmail.com
www.tenantsforsocialhousing.com

neighbourhood, Tenants for Social Housing is concerned about both the possibility and perception of a 'planned agenda' for the Special Working Group. Appointing a proponent of the sale of single dwelling homes such as Mr. Purves, and the failure to clearly identify at the outset, meaningful tenant involvement in the consultation causes skepticism and mistrust amongst tenants.

Through our past interactions and your public statements in the media, we are cautiously optimistic of your commitment to engaging tenants in this process and we ask that you formalize this commitment through a written process. Tenants for Social Housing would be interested in meeting with you to develop a meaningful tenant engagement process for the SWG.

We appreciate your taking the time to seriously consider tenant input. One thing you can do to assist us and to ensure an open and transparent process is respected, is to provide a list of the 56 'unoccupied' single dwelling homes which were approved for sale by City Council on March 5/6, 2011, as well as a written report on the condition of these homes. We would appreciate receiving this information by April 20, 2012.

In conclusion, we thank you for your leadership on affordable housing in Toronto and working to find solutions to the capital repair backlog. We look forward to contributing to this process and assisting you in bringing forward the tenant experience to help solve this crisis.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rosie DaSilva
Sandra Marcok
Susan Gapka

On behalf of Tenants for Social Housing

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