

Cohen Highley^{LLP}

L A W Y E R S

www.cohenhighley.com

Reply to London
One London Place
255 Queens Ave., 11th Floor
London, ON N6A 5R8
T 519 672-9330
F 519 672-5960

Kitchener
55 King St. West
Suite 801
Kitchener, ON N2G 4W1
T 226 476-4444
F 519 576-2830

Sarnia
1350 L'Heritage Dr.
Sarnia, ON N7S 6H8
T 519 344-2020
F 519 672-5960

Chatham
101 Keil Dr. South, Unit 2
P.O. Box 420
Chatham, ON N7M 5K6
T 226 494-1034
F 519 672-5960

February 9, 2018

Mayor Eisenberger & Councillors
Hamilton City Hall
2nd floor - 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

Re: Hamilton District Apartment Association (HDAA) and City Discussion Paper Referral

We are the lawyers for HDAA and are corresponding with you in advance of your next scheduled council meeting to request your oversight in connection with an important matter.

First, HDAA is pleased that the City of Hamilton Planning Committee has referred the discussion paper, **"Promoting Code Compliant, Affordable, Safe, Clean and Healthy Rental Housing"** to city staff for review, consideration and a report.

The position of HDAA and many community stakeholders remains unchanged: licensing rental housing brings the serious risk of significant tenant displacement and increased rents which will have a direct impact on the social service agencies which provide assistance through emergency shelters, housing support, financial assistance, and relief for some of the most vulnerable residents in your community. As such, HDAA believes that there should be a more thorough and transparent opportunity for community input from a broad range of multi-res stakeholders such as: rental housing tenants, affordable housing advocates, anti-poverty advocates, rental housing advocates, social service agencies, Realtors, rental housing providers and concerned citizens.


We congratulate the city council for the wisdom to reject licensing rental properties in 2013 and subsequently approving the formation of a Rental Housing Sub-committee with Council's approved terms of reference, **"To work with interested stakeholders to assist with the implementation of an approach to enforcement and legalization of appropriate rental housing including, but not limited to, process, fees, and by-law regulations."** Unfortunately, the sub-committee members have not been given an opportunity to fulfill their mandate.

HDAA was pleased to hear Councillor Aidan Johnson, a member of the Rental Housing Sub-Committee, honestly admit, **"Yes, there will be some amount of displacement of low income tenants from rental housing units as a result of licensing."** The Councillor proceeded to argue that the positive effects of licensing rental housing outweighs the negative impacts and that licensing should be implemented because he ran on an election promise to license rental housing. While we appreciate his honesty, we are hopeful that Councillor A. Johnson's position does **NOT** reflect the position of City Council. Political self-interest, in our respectful view, should not outweigh the interests of vulnerable constituents.

Mayor and Councillors, HDAA, through the efforts of Maple Leaf Strategies, has found that there is an eager community of stakeholders, admittedly with different missions and visions, who are unwilling to accept any displacement of our most vulnerable residents. These stakeholders have demonstrated a willingness to explore all opportunities to promote code compliant, affordable, safe, clean and healthy rental housing while protecting residents from any risk of rent increases or tenant displacement resulting from licensing of residential rental properties. These stakeholders and all concerned citizens deserve to be heard by the entire city council.

As such, HDAA requests that the City Council exercise its oversight jurisdiction and move to amend the Planning Committee recommendation by directing staff to report back to the General Issues Committee by June 20, 2018 for a transparent public discussion.

Respectfully yours,


signature electronically affixed

Joe Hoffer

Cohen Highley LLP

Email: hoffer@cohenhighley.com

cc: Client