

Dear Committee members,

We were pleased to hear that Rental Housing Sub-Committee voted in favour to recommend implementing a pilot licensing program for rental housing in Wards 1 and 8. This is something the AWWCA has endorsed for many years as we have slowly seen our neighbourhoods being devastated by the illegal conversion of single-family dwellings into multi-unit rental dwellings. During the many years, we have tried every possible way to slow this down and all along, the city, building department and bylaw department have stood blithely by and done nothing except use the reason that they could not access the houses in question. We have heard every excuse possible from all levels of city staff and officials and because of all the illegal conversions many of our permanent residents have been placed in situations that are stressful and have taken away from the quality of life that is promised to all Canadians, Ontarians and Hamiltonians.

This City continues to describe itself as a place where people's mental health is a priority and that is just not the case for many who live and have lived in the Ainslie Wood and Westdale communities. In addition McMaster University for a very well respected institute of higher education has never had the foresight to ensure adequate living spaces on campus even for their first year students and now are attempting to build a development in Westdale that will have terrible negative side effects on the immediate area and in so have added undue levels of stress on the neighbours which has affected their mental health. Unscrupulous absentee speculators who only care about the bottom line have for the most been taking advantage of loopholes and excuses and ridiculous claims. Again those permanent long time residents of the area have lived under these conditions and unfortunately many passionate residents who cared deeply in the past have just given up because of the anxiety and undeserved stress and honestly can't afford to care anymore or felt as they had no other choice but to move, leaving more single family homes to be illegally converted. In addition, because of these unregulated multi-unit rentals many tenants in particular students have been living in conditions that most would not allow their pets to live in.

Our expectation is that this new license will give the city stronger tools to address the issues and most importantly allow access to the dwellings by bylaw and other city staff with proper notice for regular inspections. To help create an environment where both the permanent residents and the tenants can live in safe conditions and where the Landlords, Absentee home owners and Property Managers will be held accountable to ensure that these converted rental homes will meet all current bylaws for Fire Safety, Building codes, Health Codes and Property standards regulations and be properly enforced.

Due to the many failures in the past, our support for this rental license is not unanimous as many are sceptical that any good will come of this, and the few responsible property owners will be financially punished. As a community association we understand the concern regarding those in the community who are less fortunate and are on fixed incomes and prefer that the cost of the license is not downloaded to the tenants and therefore in addition to the rental license we would also require a commercial business license be applied and that all rules and regulations under the landlord tenant act be enforced, these rental homes are generating profits and should be taxed accordingly.

It is very important to our board and members that with this new license we would **not** want to see any residential property within our boundaries to be grandfathered in and not be inspected, we understand that this will require much effort and we would be happy to pass along all of our data which might assist in determining which homes in the area have already been converted in particular those that were done without the proper building permits.

In addition, we would like to have a representative from our board to have a permanent position on any committees that may be created for this pilot program moving forward as we feel that we should have a voice to represent our position and our neighbourhoods.

As founding members of the TGAO "Town and Gown Association of Ontario" we have a very strong understanding of how other communities have dealt with this and we would like to recommend that the City of Hamilton and the Planning department try to implement something similar to what the City of Oshawa has done and included you will find a link to their [Residential Rental Housing Licence Application](#).

We further would recommend that McMaster University and the Student Union "MSU" also be granted permanent positions on any committee moving forward to ensure that all stakeholders are fairly represented.

Sincerely yours

Ira Rosen
President AWWCA