

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities: December 8, 2020

MOVED BY J. KEMP.....

SECONDED BY

Accessible Housing (City Wide)

WHEREAS, the need for accessible affordable housing is at a crisis level;

WHEREAS, more than twenty two percent of Canadians have a disability;

WHEREAS, anyone can be born with a disability which can afflict them without warning, at any time in their lives and anyone of any age can be struck by illness or accident which creates a temporary or lasting disability;

WHEREAS, there is currently no law requiring that housing be accessible. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) does not mention housing;

WHEREAS, the Ontario Building Code only requires that 15% of new apartments be “visitable”, not accessible enough to live there;

WHEREAS, both the AODA and the Ontario Building Code are in contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,

the Ontario Human Rights Code and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Barrier free housing is a human right;

WHEREAS, Hamilton does not need to wait for the provincial government to make changes to the laws. Change can be made at the municipal level by mandating universal design in all future City projects or any new development built with tax dollars and / or land made available by the City, and through agreements with developers. All new and renovated Hamilton community housing units must also be made accessible;

WHEREAS, the current Housing Unit Modification Guide focuses mainly on addressing the issues of people with mobility devices like wheelchairs, power chairs and scooters for example; there is a need to revise the current guide to include the needs of other disabilities, both visible and otherwise, in what is called Universal Accessible Design. This can include things like high contrast paint jobs in kitchens and bathrooms to make it easier for the visually impaired, audible and visible alarms as well as door bells, tuned so as not to trigger seizure disorders, and textured switches to name a few;

WHEREAS, the extra cost of incorporating universal design is less than one percent more when planned from the design stage. It is the renovation of existing housing that is costly; and,

WHEREAS, making all new housing accessible will reduce the City's costs for future long term care and residential care facilities by providing more independent living choices;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities respectfully recommends that the City of Hamilton make all future and retrofitted housing accessible; and,
- (b) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities respectfully recommends that the City of Hamilton expand its Housing Unit Modification Guide to incorporate universal design in order to address the accessibility needs of those not yet represented.