

6.1 (i)

To: Members of the Planning Committee City of Hamilton

From: Board of Directors Rygiel Homes Housing Corporation

Date: September 27, 2011

This memo comes in preparation of our attendance at your meeting of October 4 2011. Rygiel Homes Housing Corporation is a non profit corporation providing accessible, affordable housing for people who have a developmental disability and multiple other handicapping conditions. Most of the individuals who benefit from the housing receive care and support from Rygiel Supports For Community Living. Rygiel Supports For Community Living has served the Hamilton community for more than 43 years.

The reason we are coming forward is to ask the Committee to review our recent experiences and to determine if there can be changes to processes that will prevent the delays and excess costs we experienced.

Background:

Rygiel has more than 16 single family homes in which more than 50 people live and another 30 people receive respite. These are homes which have been purchased and renovated to be barrier free or were purpose built. Rygiel has been acquiring such properties since the late 1970s. We have worked with city staff throughout the years to ensure compliance of all requirements. City staff and Councillors have been supportive and helpful. In years past, there was continuity of staff at both the city and in our agency. This contributed to ongoing knowledge of need and of the service we provided. This was not our experience in the past couple of years. We recognize change has occurred through operational restructuring at the City. This may be in a small way, contribution to the challenges.

Funds to provide the homes come through donations, fundraising, user fee (rent paid by occupants) and in some cases, funds provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

All who live in the homes are people who depend on others for almost all aspects of daily living.

A synopsis of our recent experiences:

Re: Renovation Projects:

6.1 (i)

We were attempting to renovate a couple of houses for better barrier free design and in a couple of cases, to add means of egress from the basement.

In our efforts to proceed, we met numerous delays in information that was to be forthcoming from the city, we were advised of requirements that had not been needed previously with the explanation that we were now considered Residential Care Facilities. In the 30 plus years of serving this community, the city had never identified our homes in this way.

The costs of responding to the requirements were prohibitive. The delays in communication prevented any modifications to plans and hence, the available funds could not be used in the time required and sadly had to be returned to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The significant outcome: a number of people in desperate need of specialized housing did not receive what they needed.

Building Project:

Re: Permit Application 09-192150-00 R9

It took almost two years to complete this building from the time we first approached the city. There were significant delays in getting permits. Each time we inquired, it took an excessive amount of time before we got feedback. Throughout the process, we would be advised of a requirement and then later advised that the first information was not correct and changes were needed. This happened on a number of matters. Here is an example: We had approved drawings which included the sprinkler system. In November of 2009, the City Building Services Division had stamped their approval. This house was built accordingly. The drywall and painting were completed. The inspector visits in late September and advises that there are deficiencies including the lack of sprinkler heads in the closets, machine room and at the top of the elevator shaft. The cost of correcting this at this stage was unplanned and added to an overage for the project. This caused yet further delay for the individuals who would be moving to this home. There were additional costs associated with all the delays as a rental unit would be vacated as a result of the move. Not only did the residents have to wait for safer accommodations and new residents wait for desperately needed service, the agency paid rent for a much longer period than anticipated.

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with the Committee and offer to work with staff to find ways that will assist with efficient and effective processes for future projects. All this will contribute to our efforts to be a responsive community to its vulnerable members.