

Sunday, December 09, 2012

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Re: Licensing of multi-unit properties.

Dear City Councillors,

I am writing to show my support for the implementation of licensing for legal/illegal rental properties across the City of Hamilton.

Moving to Hamilton almost 7 years ago we have struggled with many issues related to these illegal rental properties, of which there are at least 12 in a one block stretch and most of them have absentee landlords and contain at least 4 units per house.

In our seven years here we have experienced on a constant basis:

- Drugs/ drug dealing
- prostitution
- lack of maintenance/garbage
- vandalism
- noise

One property in particular was dealt with by by-law and had two of the 4 illegal units shut down after almost two years of effort! For just one house. For a property that has been a source of trouble from the beginning. This is just unacceptable. We need a better solution, and I believe Rental Property Licensing is best solution.

We now have to start the whole process again with this particular property because the owner is now renting out the other units again when he is not suppose to.

Many of these homes are unsafe as well, most if not all of the ones on our street have wooden fire escapes which are not to code and would easily burn during a fire. Many also have units in 'attics that have no escape but to jump out the window.

The outcry by Realtors and landlords stems only from a fear that licensing will affect their 'bottom line" and not that they are worried about the welfare of their tenants. If their concern was for tenants, they would not make threats of selling their properties and forcing people on the street as one person was quoted saying in a recent Hamilton Spectator article.

The property taxes on these homes should also reflect the fact that they are a form of business not simply a residential home. Why should they pay the same taxes as myself when they make several thousand dollars a month in profit on these illegal units. They are running a business!

My hope as well would be for you to **not** consider the 'grandfathering' of these many, many illegal rental properties that encompass our city and are affecting our property values and quality of life. These properties have devastating effects and compromise already overly saturated neighbourhoods.

I ask you to please stay the course of implementing licensing fees for these properties, not just for the people that live around them but also for the safety and health of the people that live in them.

Sincerely,

Michelle Rechkemmer