

Robicheau, Vanessa

From: Sheryl and Tom Perrie
Sent: December 12, 2012 4:20 PM
To: Robicheau, Vanessa
Subject: Planning Committee --Regulation of Rental Housing

My wife and I attended the December 11, 2012 meeting of the Planning Committee regarding Regulation of Rental Properties held in city council chambers.

I didn't know about registering ahead of time to address the issues before the Planning Committee so I am writing to you with my comments. I hope I am not too late or out of order writing you in this way. Could I ask you to forward this e-mail to City Councillors. If this is not possible would you let me know so that I can dig out their individual e-mail addresses and forward it myself

My name is Tom Perrie and I have lived in Hamilton all of my life and have resided in the west Hamilton for the past 35 years.

To put it mildly, it was an absolutely jaw dropping experience to hear some of the comments from the landlords and real estate agents speaking; and there seemed to be only landlords, real estate agents and lawyers employed by the same, speaking. If they are to be believed, investment will take place in Hamilton only if there is an unregulated investment climate with regard to rental properties. That means that investors will want to be here only if anything goes, without regard to the quality or legality of the rental properties they are creating/buying. If we are serious about creating a great place to live then this is the wrong way to go about it. This is a recipe for inferior living conditions. City council should not take the position that we shouldn't regulate rental properties. This would make landlords happy — too bad about the renters. When it was suggested that many rental properties were going "under ground" in Waterloo there was even a smattering of applause. This speaks volumes about the landlords' attitude regarding any constraints on the way they conduct business.

They made much of the thirty percent figure and how many would be evicted from their homes. If I read the report correctly the thirty percent figure would be true only if every one (100%) of the properties reverted to their pre-conversion use. This is the absolute worst case scenario that was being talked about as if it were factual. It may be that there will be some initial reduction in rental properties as the illegal and substandard units are weeded out, but I fail to see that weeding out illegal and substandard rental units is a bad thing. This is surely a desirable outcome and in fact what the proposed licensing regime is meant to address. It is inevitable that these lost units will be replaced by other refurbished or new legal conversions that will meet minimum requirements for rental properties. This is a good thing.

One of the speakers talked about having only enough income from his rental property left at the end of the month to treat his family to dinner at McDonald's. Do not believe this. Rental properties in my neighbourhood (Anslie Wood North) generate gross rental income in the \$35,000 to \$40,000 a year range. Given the level of maintenance on these properties there is bound to be a lot more at the end of the month than the price of some big Macs. The profit is there. Properties are routinely snapped up with very short listing times. This would not happen if the returns were not there. It is a very rare occurrence when a property sold in my neighbourhood is sold to a family. Real estate agents will almost always tell the vendors that the house is being sold to a family and this lie on their part has become routine.

One of the speakers who I believe represented the real estate association said the rental properties were well maintained. He would have to live in an alternate universe for this to be true. It is quite easy to pick out the rental properties in my neighbourhood simply by looking at how well they are maintained. We were told by renters in the properties on both sides of us that basement rooms had flooding problems over the last few years. Garbage and noise are continuing problems.

I would also question the notion promoted at the meeting that outside investors buying already existing housing stock here have any real positive impact on our community. They are not building anything here; it is simply a commercial transaction. Aside from real estate fees there is no benefit to Hamilton.

I'm not sure what the way forward should be. But I can tell you with absolute certainty that the status quo is not it. We have lived in our home for over thirty-five years and have lost many friends and neighbours who have left because of the deterioration of the neighbourhood. Anslie Wood North has approximately fifty-five percent rental houses, each one having six to ten renters, and yet two retired people living in a house pay the same taxes as a house that grosses \$35,000 - \$40,000 a year in rents because the property assessments reflect the value of houses as commercial enterprises, not single family dwellings. This hardly seems fair.

When we moved here in 1977 Anslie Wood North was a vibrant and desirable community full of families and community life. Unregulated rentals are turning it into a slum. It may well be past the tipping point. This is a problem that has been ignored for too long. Sheryl and I intend to hang on here as long as we can but something needs to be done to redress the balance to what has become a dysfunctional landscape. An unregulated rental market has not worked in the past and it is up to city council to do something about it. Pandering to investors (often absentee landlords) whose only interest is profit does a grave disservice to the people who actually live in the community.

Thank you for your attention.

Your truly,

Sheryl and Tom Perrie