

July 25, 2007

LICENSING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE:

City Council on July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2007, referred the following Motion to the Licensing and Standards Committee:

M83 Proactive Inspections of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Units Citywide – Expansion of Pilot Project

Moved by Councillor Palacio, seconded by Councillor Moscoe

SUMMARY:

A recent Toronto Star report identified a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building as having the most outstanding work orders of any building in the entire City of Toronto. This should be a huge embarrassment for the City of Toronto.

The City should set the bar high in terms of property standards for our own buildings because when we poorly maintain our own buildings, to a standard below even what our own By-laws allow, we lose any moral authority to enforce essential property standards and set a terrible example. This bad example often brings down the neighbourhoods surrounding these developments. City Council has an extra duty to ensure that property standards are high for TCHC tenants, as many are Toronto's most vulnerable citizens.

In 2005, a successful pilot project was conducted in the two TCHC buildings located within Ward 17. Through this pilot, over 300 Orders to Comply were issued that resulted in dramatically improved conditions for the tenants who live there. This approach proved much more successful than simply relying on TCHC inspections which did not investigate property standards and merely looked at matters such as fire safety.

A comprehensive inspection will only serve to help quantify the extent of disrepair that the City of Toronto inherited from the Provincial government and help to make the case for uploading.

Although there is clearly good faith on the part of TCHC, the actual results have failed tenants. The City of Toronto, through Municipal Licensing and Standards, has a moral and legal obligation to intervene. Although it is tempting to, we cannot give City-owned agencies preferential treatment when it comes at the expense of the health and safety of tenants and our most vulnerable citizens and City By-laws are being contravened.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, undertake a unit-by-unit inspection of at least ten of the worst buildings in the TCHC portfolio and issue appropriate Orders to Comply, and that a summary of these investigations be reported to the Licensing and Standards Committee as soon as possible.

Council also considered a Financial Impact Statement (July 17, 2007) from the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer.

for City Clerk

M. Toft/cd

Attach.