

Date: May 19, 2009

TO: Members of the Affordable Housing Committee

FROM: Sean Gadon
Director, Affordable Housing Office

RE: **AH 8.10 – 290 Old Weston Road – Request for Consideration as Affordable Housing**

At its meeting of January 20, 2009 the Committee referred for consideration the member motion from Councillor Cesar Palacio, Ward 17 - Davenport to Deputy City Manager Sue Corke and Director, Affordable Housing Office, with a request that they report to the next meeting of the Committee as to the feasibility of converting 290 Old Weston Road to affordable housing, including Habitat for Humanity.

The property in question is a former dry cleaning facility, and is unsuitable for redevelopment as housing for two key reasons: 1) it is known to be contaminated, and 2) it is designated as an employment area in the City's Official Plan.

The level of contamination on the site has not been conclusively established, but dry cleaning facilities are known to be among the most costly and problematic to remediate. The unknown costs associated with the environmental clean up of this site rule out its redevelopment as affordable housing as no affordable housing proponent can assume the degree of financial risk represented by the site. Further, in the likely event that remediation costs are high, housing costs to the residents, whether tenants or owners, would need to be raised, making the housing unaffordable.

The site is designated as an employment area in the City's Official Plan. Current City of Toronto policies call for the protection of employment lands and discourage their conversion to non employment uses. Provincial policy also exists that reflects this policy position from a land use planning perspective. The OMB has recently turned down an appeal to convert a nearby industrial property to residential use, and the Community Planning Office could not support the conversion of this site. Even in the event that the site were allowed to convert to residential use, the timelines and costs associated with a re-zoning and Official Plan Amendment would be prohibitively high.

Sean Gadon
Director
Affordable Housing Office

