

**Affordable Housing Committee Meeting No. 9**

**Meeting Date** Wednesday, May 20, 2009 **Start Time** 9:30 AM

**Location** Committee Room 1, City Hall

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**Housing Opportunities Toronto: An Affordable Housing Action Plan**

**2010 – 2020**

My name is Sophie Zhao. I live with my husband and 4 year old daughter in an apartment in Toronto and we spend 75% of our income on rent. We are one of many young families making a start in Toronto. I came to St. Stephen's Community House for help during my pregnancy and now I continue as a part-time worker helping other young families making their start. For me affordable rental housing for families is my top concern.

As a staff person, I can also speak for St. Stephen's and what other people tell us.

Last year, St. Stephen's Community House hosted consultations on "Housing Opportunities Toronto". We spoke to young families like mine, seniors living alone in government housing, and homeless people waiting for supportive housing.

- The young families top concern was that their housing was too small and overcrowded. They need new housing to be big enough for families
- The seniors were living in a senior building and were mostly concern about needing repairs and security for their building
- The men who were homeless and living with a disability need housing for single people now and need supportive housing. This is their top concern and they were most desperate.

These remain our top concerns.

We congratulate you for including all of our concerns in your Action Plan.

We congratulate you for listening to many people and including many different strategies over the 10 years.

- We are concerned that your targets are still too low. 10,000 new affordable rental homes and 10,700 new supportive housing units in 10 years is not enough. We ask you to double these targets. We would ask the plan to make sure all 10,000 new homes are family-sized.

- We support new rent supplements or housing benefits for families and individuals, such as being proposed by Daily Bread Food Bank.

- We agree with others who say that surplus City land be used for new housing to ensure that new housing is located all over the city and not limited to big projects in suburban areas.

Thank you for listening to Toronto and making such a strong Affordable Housing Plan.

Young families like mine need your help and need to see results.

If you need me to share my experience when you speak to the Province or the Federal Government about housing – I am happy to work with you and so is St. Stephen's Community House.

Thank you