

DEPUTATION

To: **Subcommittee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing, Planning and Housing Committee**

DATE: **Wednesday, November 20 2019**

RE: **Promoting the Security of Residential Rental Tenancies (RH2.1)**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you again today on behalf of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH). As you are aware, the TAEH is a collective impact initiative made up of Community Partners focussed on what it will take to end homelessness in Toronto.

We are here today to speak in support of the recommendations from staff in the report for Item RH2.1, as well as to demonstrate our support for this subcommittee and the Planning and Housing Committee as a whole in addressing these important issues.

We also encourage this subcommittee to propose broadening the scope of what can be done beyond N12 and N13 evictions, and to include the role of the city in supporting tenants who are at risk of and being threatened with eviction in the report coming back in January.

This could include ways to increase support for SSHA's successful EPIC (Eviction Prevention) program or accelerate progress on Coordinated Access. We also think that discussions tonight and into the next weeks could also be useful in analysing and strengthening, if need be, the final recommendations of Housing TO.

Most importantly, we are here to make crystal clear, that renovictions, and other types of predatory landlord behaviour, directly cause homelessness. With the number of people experiencing homelessness only increasing, ratcheting up the emergency homelessness now is in Toronto, every item that Council considers in relation to housing must put what can be done to reduce inflow into homelessness and accelerate outflow first. In this way, decisions and actions will contribute to ending, and not only managing, homelessness.

Anecdotal evidence from my discussions with TAEH partners suggest that, on average, there are probably 3-4 illegal evictions every month in smaller buildings of 30-60 tenants. One larger partner has data on over 600 individuals that have been illegally evicted in 2019. When real estate analysts (like Urbanation Inc. quoted in a Oct. 23 2019 Globe and Mail article) estimate that average rents have risen 30% in the last 3 years, and that amongst recently rented one-bedroom apartments the average lease rate was over \$2,500.00/month it is not a stretch to say that many of these people "renovicted" are suddenly at risk of, or quickly become, homeless.

We also know that evictions of all kind play a direct role in why people become homeless in the first place. The most recent Street Needs Assessment (April 2018) showed this, and the dramatic way evictions drive particular types of homelessness. 31% of people outdoors are there for non-financial eviction reasons or being unable to pay their rent. It is 27% for people in respite sites.

Finally, it is important for all of us to tackle renovations and related practices as they tar the reputation of all landlords. There are a remarkable number of landlords who work with TAEH partners and other service providers every day – and night – to create access and support some of the city’s most vulnerable people and tenants. As we identify and root out bad practices, let’s also draw on and augment what the good landlords do.

CONCLUSION

The TAEH welcomes this much needed discussion on how we can stop renovations and other practices, loopholes, that result in a decrease of affordable rental housing in our city. We applaud staff and Committee members in the work done to date, and we trust that you all agree that there is no room for losing any more of our affordable rental stock as the homelessness crisis rages all around us.

Thank you.

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