



HOUSING ACTION NOW
c/o Kensington Bellwoods Community Legal Services
489 College Street, #205
Toronto ON M6G 1A5

October 4, 2012

Mr. Chair and Members of the Executive Committee,

I am here on behalf of Housing Action Now (HAN). HAN is a large network of organizations in the City of Toronto including seniors' groups, housing organizations, child welfare and faith groups, legal clinics, and tenant and anti-poverty organizations. HAN believes that every person has a right to safe, affordable and well-maintained housing.

Given this mandate, we are vitally concerned with the report of the Special Housing Work Group that is before you today. Generally, HAN's position on this matter is:

- a) All people have a right to safe, affordable housing;
- b) We cannot afford to lose any of the affordable housing stock in Toronto;
- c) Tenants should not be arbitrarily removed from their homes and communities;
- d) Mixed communities, in which these scattered units are located, make for better communities than those which are not;
- e) The Federal and Provincial Governments are obliged to work together to create affordable housing programs, and the city should spearhead a campaign to achieve that goal.

However, we don't live in a perfect world, and when we considered that only a year ago or so we were facing a loss of approximately 700 units, this report struck us as a vast improvement and we want to thank Councillor Bailoa and the other members of the Special Housing Working Group for their hard work since its formation in March of this year. They took their job seriously and entertained a broad array of ideas and input to their deliberations which is reflected in the report.

The report informs us that 55 properties are recommended for sale, but those properties represent 80 homes, and when added to another earlier group of about 56 homes or properties put up for sale, and another group of 47 a couple of years ago, it starts to add up. Whether or not the homes were rent geared to income or were market rent units, it means a family is or will be uprooted and community connections lost. It means less housing protected from the relentless upward pressure on rents in this expensive city. So, as much as we are happy to see the majority of the units not pushed over the edge, we must register our serious concern over this loss. The people who live or lived in these houses had a right to believe that they were there forever.

We ask that you support this report and recommend it to Council. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hurd
Community Legal Worker