

PH10.4.10

November 12, 2019

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Nancy Martins

RE: PH 10.4 Amendments to Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, and Progress Update on RentSafeTO

Dear Chair and Members, Planning and Housing Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to represent my community at this Planning and Housing Committee meeting

My name is Shakhlo Sharipova and I am a resident of Thorncliffe Park, I am a community ambassador for The Neighbourhood Organization/TNO and a leader of Reach for Change group. Our mission (group mission) *is strengthening community in order to create a safe and well-established environment to raise our children, encouraging members to a constant learning and teaching them how effectively we can employ our potentials for a better future.*

I would like to begin by giving you some Demographics of Thorncliffe Park
Approximately 36 buildings within Thorncliffe Park

2016 Census states population is 21,108 –with a population density of 6,787 people per square km.

Renter Households – 88.9%

Buildings that have 5+ storeys – 93.4 %

Mother Tongue Not English – 73.9%

Medium Income - \$46,595

Low Income (LICO-AT) 37.5% of the population – City of Toronto is 17.4%

I am proud to say that my community was a significant part of a comprehensive engagement approach undertaken by Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) to better understand the issues related to apartment buildings maintenance and operations in Toronto.

Lead TNO and with the support of many stakeholders such as Flemingdon Community Legal Services, Toronto Public Health, Flemingdon-Thorncliffe Interagency Network

(FTIAN), Federation of Metro Tenants Association and many residents' groups such as Reach for Change, the TP Parenting group, the TP Wellness café, and Rent Safe Toronto we organized:

- Four Community Consultation Meetings
- Two Tenants' Rights Information Sessions
- Several Workshops, which engaged a total of more than 300 residents

During these events three main categories - Housing Affordability, Quality/maintenance, and Safety were widely discussed. Not all these matters are within the scope of the Agenda item PH10.4.

Building Maintenance

1. I would like to focus first on some Maintenance issues that were raised in the TP meetings: The buildings in Thorncliffe Park are generally in a deplorable state. There are issues over the entire neighbourhood - buildings are old.
2. Maintenance requests are often ignored, or when fulfilled they are half-done or done with unsafe patchwork fixes. Units in bad conditions do not get renovated; Sometimes landlords require residents to move out in case of a renovation, and then back in again but to a higher rent.
3. Facilities such as elevators, laundry rooms and garbage were reported to be frequently inadequate or even unsafe. Residents also expressed hygiene concerns about sharing poorly maintained laundry facilities with so many others. Balconies are also in a bad state of repair.
4. Garbage facilities were also indicated to be inadequate, especially for recycling. Compost facilities are absent in most of the buildings. This causes a major garbage problem in many buildings with garbage left in corridors, outside the buildings, or in overflowing heaps in the garbage room. Due to garbage issues, racoons are a common nuisance of buildings, in addition to other pests such as bedbugs, cockroaches, mice and pigeons were noted to be a major problem. The issue is widespread enough in this area that landlords ignore requests for pest control, stating that these problems are "normal" in every building.
5. Landlords don't have back up plans for urgent/emergency issues. For example, the water outage incident at one of the buildings at Thorncliffe Park Drive. More than 2,000 residents including seniors and children were affected because of the lack of an emergency plan in this facility.

Safety

There are also many major Safety issues we would like to bring, though they are beyond the scope of PH10.4. Safety both within residential buildings and outside in the neighbourhood was a major concern among all community residents:

- lack of security cameras which leads to unsafe entrances and risk of vandalism;
- bad state of repair of balconies,
- management has no control over drug addicts and smokers in the building.

Based on our finding and Consultation Summary of PH10.4, we as a group of residents make following overall recommendations:

1. Older buildings (40-50 years old) need proactive maintenance, could be a phone line monitored by the landlords. We ask city to put pressure on the landlords
2. Every building should be painted a prescribed number of years, so quality is maintained.
3. Apartment buildings should install automatic garbage chutes.
4. Lower visitors' parking fees.
5. Landlords and residents need to plan how to respond to a climate crisis including extreme weather conditions. Need to look between poverty and low-income families.
6. Although the report PH10.4 is comprehensive and we strongly agree with every single point, now we encourage Committee to vote for the budget allocation to support the enforcement all of the actions brought in the report.

Additional Recommendations on PH10.4 directly:

We strongly agree with the staff report's 6 recommendations, and we would like to highlight the following items

1. Recommendation # 1 – If a tenant requests copies of the evaluation – there should be **no** photocopy charge or fee charged by the landlord to provide a copy
6. Posting of Pest Management Information, Controls and Treatments – should also include Waste Management Information, Controls and Treatments
 - b. Schedule of Pest Control Services – still ensure that individual units be provided with the required 24-hour notice of entry as required by the Residential Tenancies Act, Residential Tenancies Act, 2006; S.O. 2006, CHAPTER 17, Section 27 (1)(1)

We strongly support the report's recommendations for **greater Collaboration, Awareness and Education Programs and Tools** as it affects the following:

Page 22 of 27 – Lack of awareness of the RentSafe TO program among newcomers and those where is English/French is not their first language – need materials in other languages

Page 7 of 27 – Landlords are now responsible for developing and providing information on Tenant Service Requests, Tenant Notification Boards, Pest and Waste Management,

and other such tools. - - **Can the information also be provided in the core languages of tenants in the building** to include greater education with landlords and tenants on best practices

Climate Controls – Education and Awareness

Page 18 – Education for designing spaces that can achieve indoor thermal comfort levels without the use of electricity

On page 17/18 concerns were raised on the lack of updated heat and air conditioning units in older buildings – Environment and Energy Division – could they also investigate possible/potential grants for landlords to implement replacement of older units or providing new units as required

Page 25 of 27 – Electricity and Suite Metering – encourage ongoing advocacy to ensure strong and clear guidelines and oversight to ensure hydro is not being cut off in individual units

Good State of Repairs –

On page 14 of 27 concerns are raised about the good state of repair in apartment buildings and the Emergency Planning tools

Page 20 of 27 Elevators – Encourage Province to proclaim the Access to Consumer Credit Reports and Elevator Availability Act, 2018 to create penalties and standards for elevator downtime and other improvements

Page 21 of 27 - Adopt the Best Practises from the DineSafeTo program and to post results

Landlords could work with Toronto Community Benefits Network, Toronto Trade Connections to work with youth and local high schools – to education, mentor and work with students to facilitate repairs, maintenance, mentoring - could be a way of reducing fines

If the City of Toronto requires a Capital Improvement plan from landlords to ensure proper replacement of aging equipment as part of the audit - then there should also be a published Capital Expenditure and Capital Investment plan to ensure capital expenditures are not constantly being included in Above Guideline Rent Increase applications before the Landlord Tenant Board.

Thank you.

Shakhlo Sharipova
Leader, Reach for Change