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To Councillors on the Planning & Housing Committee,

My name is Marcia Stone, Co-Chair of Weston ACORN and I wanted to thank you for your time. As you know ACORN is a tenant & community union made up of low moderate income people, active across the city, fighting for social & economic justice. I'm writing to share my thoughts on the 'annual report' on Housing Now.

We're concerned - tenants are concerned. The biggest issue is the lack of rent control on Housing Now sites. We need rent control capped at the provincial guideline. The staff recommendation of 2% on top of the guideline would be 4.2% this year. What working person making a moderate income is getting a 4.2% raise every year?

Secondly, another issue on this report is transparency & accountability. This is our land, but we can't see any justification for why city staff is proposing a 2% increase on top of the provincial guideline. All we're hearing is 'trust us'. We saw with the inclusionary zoning report, developer profits were baked into the numbers. It's hard to trust you on this. And keep in mind, the land being given away to developers is our land, so it should be the other way: you should trust us with the information you're using to make these decisions.

Third, the report mentions rules for AGI's. AGI's are broken across the province, and the process is usually a rubber stamp at the landlord tenant board. If the city is creating rules for AGI's then this is an opportunity to create good rules that protect tenants. Like a cockroach clause: building has cockroaches and the landlord isn't dealing with it? No AGI!

Fourth, from the beginning we've said this program should provide 100% rental units, 50% affordable units, with deep affordability and real rent control including vacancy control. If the market, and private developers, will only do this program with huge giveaways, such as bad rent control, then maybe the market isn't the proper route to deliver affordable housing and the city needs to look to the non-profit housing sector.

Toronto is in an affordable housing crisis and COVID-19 is making it worse. ACORN has a vested interest in ensuring low & moderate income tenants that work so hard to keep this city functioning are able to afford to live here. At the very least, give us real real rent control.

Marcia Stone,
Co-Chair, Weston ACORN