

From: [Brendan Jowett \(NLS\)](#)
To: [Executive Committee](#)
Cc: [Victoria Peter \(NLS\)](#); [Molly Churchill \(NLS\)](#); [Daniel Bastien \(NLS\)](#); [Jennifer Stone \(NLS\)](#)
Subject: My comments for 2022.EX31.4 on March 30, 2022 Executive Committee
Date: March 29, 2022 5:09:24 PM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the March 30, 2022 Executive Committee meeting on item 2022.EX31.4, Strategic Acquisition of 214 to 230 Sherbourne Street to Support City-Building

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

To: City of Toronto Executive Committee
From: Victoria Peter, Molly Churchill, Brendan Jowett and Daniel Bastien of Neighbourhood Legal Services
Re: Item EX31.4, March 30, 2022 - Strategic Acquisition of 214 to 230 Sherbourne Street to Support City-Building

COMMENT ON ITEM EX31.4

Since 1973, Neighbourhood Legal Services (NLS) has served Toronto's downtown east communities, including St. Jamestown, the Church Street Corridor, Regent Park, Moss Park, and the Esplanade. Our communities experience some of the highest rates of poverty in the province. At the same time, from our office at Queen and Jarvis we see cranes racing to build sparkling luxury condo developments in every direction. We know - and our clients know - that this housing is not being built for them. 214-230 Sherbourne is in the heart of our community. For 10 years it has sat vacant, a taunting reminder that in the City of Toronto, the interests of a single private property owner trump the interests of potentially hundreds of families in having decent, dignified housing.

As housing lawyers and paralegals, we are witnessing the rapid loss of affordable housing in our communities in real time. A newcomer family in Moss Park is currently facing eviction from their social housing unit so that Toronto Community Housing can do repairs to the building. They are being offered a move to a different unit, but the only other options for a family of their size are in the far-flung corners of the city. Imagine your children having to change schools, moving away from the friends you have made and community you have built while you settle in Canada, and losing more than 90 minutes a day with your children so you can commute further to work. And the reason for this tremendous loss and disruption is because there are no affordable housing options for you in the neighbourhood where you and your family have built your life.

We are also seeing households in affordable private rentals being threatened by "renovictions" as landlords try to maximize profit by booting out long-term tenants to jack rental prices. For example, one household who has been living in their two-bedroom

apartment for close to a decade and pays just over \$1,000/month in rent is being pressured by their landlord to vacate their unit for extensive repairs and renovations - while the landlord refuses to follow proper legal procedure. For this low-income household who does not currently have subsidized rent, the prospect of having to find new housing, whether temporarily or permanently, is terrifying. There is simply no way they would be able to afford a two-bedroom apartment downtown in 2022.

Since 2019, NLS has been fighting alongside tenants of the Inglewood Arms, one of Toronto's largest rooming houses and last remaining vestiges of "affordable" housing in the Downtown East - a small room with shared bathroom facilities may rent for over \$1000.00 per month. The Inglewood Arms provides housing for about 100 low-income tenants. A developer wants to demolish the 90-unit rooming house to build a 36-storey luxury condominium tower. The tenants of the Inglewood Arms have built their lives in the Downtown East. They operate a tenant-run food bank to ensure that residents have enough food to eat, they use local parks and businesses, and they have friends who live in the building and neighbourhood. While billion-dollar developers plan out the future for the Inglewood Arms, tenants are left asking - where do I belong in this city?

The housing and homelessness crisis in Toronto is not inevitable. It is the result of decades of political decision-making which has favoured the interests of private capital over those of poor and working-class people. The housing crisis is an emergency, and should be met with a proportionate emergency response. The City must shift its approach to social housing not as a service to be begrudgingly offered, but as a critical infrastructure need akin to roads, transit and running water. We strongly support the City in taking action to expropriate 214-230 Sherbourne for the purpose of providing affordable housing.