



November 6, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Toronto City Councillors, and the City Clerk

RE: No Demovictions' comments for 2023.NY8.10 48 Grenoble Drive - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition Applications - Decision Report - Approval, on November 8, 2023 City Council

We are writing today ***to strongly urge that you do not vote to approve item NY8.10***, which would demolish 48 Grenoble Drive and displace its vulnerable tenants amidst an affordable housing crisis. We had the opportunity to attend North York Community Council's (NYCC) meeting on October 17, 2023 and provide deputations to Councillors about the City and applicant's lack of meaningful engagement with 48 Grenoble tenants regarding this proposal. In our view, there has been inadequate consultation and communication with this particularly vulnerable tenant community. To approve the application under these circumstances would be shameful on the part of Toronto City Council.

It is important to note that the tenant population at 48 Grenoble is consistent with the broader demographic profile of Flemington Park (FP). The vast majority of residents (71%) do not speak English or French as their mother tongue, and the majority don't use the official languages in their home. The languages tenants most commonly understand are: Urdu, Tagalog, Farsi, Gujarati, Tamil, etc. Based on our survey of 48 Grenoble tenants on October 15, which included door knocking at every apartment and extensive tenant interviews, it became evident that at least 50% of the tenants did not fully understand the intentions of the owner to demolish the building and displace them. They did not understand the Tenant Relocation and Assistance Plan (TRAP), and were under the faulty impression that they would receive significant cash payouts to move and that new homes would be found for them, with no effort required on their part. The lack of knowledge and the misapprehensions were likely due to language barriers and poor communication of options for translation.

It was not until we raised concerns at the October NYCC meeting that Councillors requested that the developer/applicant provide additional consultation with enhanced translation options. This additional consultation consisted of a two-hour meeting between tenants, City Planning staff, and the developer/landlord on November 2nd. It was well-attended with appropriate interpretation options. However, while tenants now better understand the terms of the TRAP, they are not pleased with the application, nor the process used to push it through. It would be a massive over-reach to call this a "consultation process" - it is clear that what the additional meeting achieved was achieving a bare minimum shared understanding of the demolition process and TRAP terms and protections. And with less than a week of tenants comprehending the proposal and it being recommended for City Council

approval, this does not give tenants adequate or fair opportunity to develop a counter-proposal for consideration by City Planning.

Another key issue to consider regarding this application is that it will effectively displace an economically vulnerable community that is already facing housing precarity and will likely face severe negative housing outcomes if they are displaced. Tenants of 48 Grenoble have expressed concerns regarding their ability to find interim housing should this application be approved. This is consistent with the economic realities of Flemingdon Park residents; 88% of FP residents live in apartment dwellings, and have a much higher rate of core housing need than the rest of Toronto. This means they spend a far greater proportion of income on housing costs, or they are inadequately housed. Additionally, all income and poverty measures for FP indicate an economically marginalized population. Compared to the rest of Toronto, this equates to lower median incomes and a substantially higher proportion of children and the elderly living below the low-income cut-off. There is no doubt that 48 Grenoble tenants will struggle to find alternative housing in Toronto once they are evicted, given the lack of affordable rentals.

While we understand the need to increase housing supply in Toronto, we cannot support the 48 Grenoble proposal, and we strongly urge Toronto City Councillors and the Mayor of Toronto to vote against approving it. We are increasingly concerned that, in their drive for more housing supply, the Province and the City of Toronto ignore the human rights and core needs of tenants, who in many cases, are the most vulnerable parties to development policies. We are equally alarmed that housing development continues to be driven by corporate and financialized developers, which naturally target older, rent-controlled buildings to demolish - further chipping away at Toronto's stock of affordable rental housing. We urge you all to consider alternative options that create sustainable, affordable, livable, and humane housing options that do not come at the expense of existing tenants, demolishing perfectly livable affordable housing.

We will continue to sound the alarm on the important issue of demovictions in Toronto, and across Ontario, and broader issues of rental housing affordability, rent/vacancy control, and enhancing tenant inclusion in policy-making. We welcome any opportunity to work with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

The No Demovictions Team