

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM5.4	ACTION			Ward: 5
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Securing a Long-Term Future for Seniors at the Beech Hall Housing Co-operative - by Councillor Frances Nunziata, seconded by Councillor Brad Bradford

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Frances Nunziata, seconded by Councillor Brad Bradford, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in consultation with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to bring a policy framework to the April 27, 2023 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee, and as part of Council's 2023 Housing Action Plan, to guide the renewal of ground leases with non-profit housing providers (including co-ops) on City-owned land, to support their long-term financial and operating viability including exploring opportunities and sources of capital and operating funding.
2. City Council request the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to prioritize the renewal of Beech Hall Co-operative, by the end of March 2024, subject to Council approval of the new policy framework referenced in Recommendation 1 above, and to support Beech Hall Co-operative to develop a plan for the modernization of residential units within the sixteen buildings.
3. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, as part of the lease negotiations, to work with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to engage with Beech Hall Co-operative to find a mutually agreeable solution to the Co-operative's challenges to obtain comprehensive property insurance.
4. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to work collaboratively with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation in supporting the long-term sustainability of non-profit and co-operative housing developments which are subject to expiring long-term leases on public land.

Summary

The Beech Hall Housing Co-operative located in Mount Dennis has for more than forty years successfully operated and provided affordable non-profit rental housing for seniors in 127

homes located in sixteen city owned low-rise buildings.

The original intentional community of Beech Hall was built by the Borough of York Housing Company in 1950 government support and funding to provide affordable bachelor and one-bedroom homes for seniors in Mount Dennis and the Borough.

On January 4, 1980, the Co-operative entered into a forty-five year lease with the former Borough of York Housing Company Limited for the purposes of saving the buildings from demolition and continuing to provide affordable non-profit rental housing for low-income seniors within a vibrant livable community.

On December 2, 2016 and December 7, 2017, the Co-operative entered into Agreements with City of Toronto through the Toronto Renovates Program to secure federal/provincial funding of approximately five million dollars to undertake major capital works to all sixteen buildings, including improved lighting, installation of new intercom systems, new windows, exterior below surface waterproofing, and installation of accessibility ramps.

The Co-operative has successfully managed their business and maintained the municipal asset since 1980. However, with less than two years left on the original lease, they are anxious about securing a long-term future for the Co-operative and current and future residents.

Given that the current lease expires on January 3, 2025, the Co-operative has contacted city officials and requested that the process begin to negotiate a new long-term lease at below market so as to continue with certainty their operations in providing affordable non-profit housing for seniors.

As the property and buildings are a municipal asset, the Co-operative has also requested the city's assistance in addressing the issue of securing necessary property insurance against flooding, including necessary funding to implement any required flood protection measures within the sixteen buildings.

The Co-operative has also requested, as part of entering into a new long-term lease, that the city provide financial assistance to help support modernizing individual units upon resident turn-over.

This Motion requests that the appropriate city officials continue to work with the Co-operative and their representatives and report and make recommendations to the Planning and Housing Committee no later than their meeting on November 30, 2023.

The recommendations to include provisions for a new long-term lease at below market value, the resolution of the issue of flooding and appropriate property insurance coverage, and the approach and funding for the modernization of units on resident turn-over.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM5.4