



Advocacy Centre
for Tenants Ontario | Tenant Duty
Counsel Program



Don Valley
Community Legal Services

March 20, 2026

To: City Council

Re: Item EX29.14 - Cracking Down on Bad Landlords

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) is a non-profit organization that aims to advance and protect the interests of low-income and moderate-income tenants. We strive for the advancement of human rights and justice in housing through legal advice and representation, law reform, community organizing, and more, including providing tenant duty counsel services for Ontarians at the Landlord and Tenant Board. ACTO is a member of the City's Tenant's Advisory Committee and the Renter's Action Committee.

Don Valley Community Legal Services (DVCLS) is a community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario. Our catchment area includes Wards 14, 15, 16 and 19, and sections of Wards 11 and 12. We serve many diverse communities and our clients are lower-income, racialized, and primarily renters. Housing law cases now make up over one third of all cases at DVCLS. We see the impacts, both positive and negative, that legislation and bylaws have on our clients.

ACTO and DVCLS work to help renters, prevent evictions, and advocate for better protections for tenants. We have worked together on law reform projects, such as the new renovations bylaw in Toronto.

The ongoing issues at 500 Dawes Road are very concerning and the building has a notorious history of disrepair and neglect. This apartment building is located in the catchment area of DVCLS and we continue to support the tenants. There have been several times where Canada Post has stopped delivering mail to the building due to health and safety issues, which means tenants are not receiving notices from the Landlord and Tenant Board. DVCLS staff attended the site visit with Mayor Chow last summer and we were pleased to hear her commitment for remedial action.

The landlord of 500 Dawes, and other landlords across Toronto, continue to act with impunity when it comes to the City's attempts to enforce property standards orders. The worst landlords often practice a system where they ignore letters, notices, and visits from City staff, resulting in orders that are eventually challenged at the Property Standards Panel or further to Provincial Offences Court. These bad actors conduct themselves in this way to purposely hold off the enforcement of these orders and delay

making the necessary repairs to maintain their buildings. In the end, the tenants suffer and continue to face hardship. Precious City resources are also spent throughout this ongoing and repeated cycle.

We have heard that the landlord of 500 Dawes was previously fined in 2024 by the Provincial Offences Court, and it made no difference in the situation the tenants were facing. It is clear more enforcement, greater fines, and remedial action are needed to deter these bad actors.

The City has the authority to take remedial action against these landlords. This permits the City to hire contractors to perform the necessary work and then recoup the costs of the remedial action through the building's property tax bill. Such power to apply costs to the landlord's property taxes can be derived from the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, SO 2006, c 11, Sch A – section 386 and *Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings*. The remedial action powers exist in other by-laws, for example, *Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 629, Property Standards*. Please see the appendix below.

500 Dawes would not be the first time the City has used its remedial action powers. For example, in 2021, the City took remedial action at 279 Woodfield Road. This building is owned by the same owner of 500 Dawes. There was a broken sanitary/storm drainpipe that caused flooding in the basement, and it led to various other issues. The local Councillor (Paula Fletcher), MLS, Toronto Buildings and Toronto Water were involved in ensuring the remedial action took place. Toronto Water made the repairs to fix the drainpipe issue and Toronto Building hired a contractor to fix the front entrance stairs, which were also falling apart. This made a huge difference to the tenants who lived in the building.

In response to the supplementary report from the City Solicitor, advocating for legislative amendments at the provincial level is one route to address this issue. However, that will take time, there are no guarantees, and renters will continue to suffer. We suggest that Council instead create a guide for MLS for cases where there are multiple complaints involving multiple deficiencies. A single order containing all the deficiencies could proceed through the appeal process efficiently. By including all of the deficiencies in one order, this would also bolster the position that the building presents a risk to the health and safety of tenants. For both of these reasons, an inclusive Order process would lead to a stronger possibility of remedial action taking place against bad actors. We also support higher fines for repeat offenders.

We would also like to remind the City that in 2019, the City of Toronto recognized housing as a human right in its Housing Charter and HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan. The City believes that everyone has a right to housing that is habitable – this means housing that provides a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which to thrive. The tenants of 500 Dawes are not living in habitable homes. Too many tenants are facing serious disrepair issues in their homes and the City needs to take action to address these issues. You have the power to make Toronto's apartment buildings immeasurably safer for all residents by taking stronger action.

We hope the City will better use its power of remedial action to make repairs desperately needed by tenants.

Sincerely,

Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
Don Valley Community Legal Services

Appendix

City of Toronto Act, 2006, SO 2006, c 11, Sch A – section 386

- **Remedial action**
 - **386** (1) If the City has the authority under this or any other Act or under a by-law under this or any other Act to direct or require a person to do a matter or thing, the City may also provide that, in default of it being done by the person directed or required to do it, the matter or thing shall be done at the person's expense.

- **Entry upon land**
 - (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the City may enter upon land at any reasonable time.

- **Recovery of costs**
 - (3) The City may recover the costs of doing a matter or thing under subsection (1) from the person directed or required to do it by action or by adding the costs to the tax roll and collecting them in the same manner as property taxes.

- **Interest**
 - (4) The costs include interest calculated at a rate of 15 per cent or such lesser rate as may be determined by the City, calculated for the period commencing on the day the City incurs the costs and ending on the day the costs, including the interest, are paid in full.

- **Lien for costs**
 - (5) The amount of the costs, including interest, constitutes a lien on the land upon the registration in the proper land registry office of a notice of lien.

- **Same**
 - (6) The lien is in respect of all costs that are payable at the time the notice is registered plus interest accrued at the rate established under subsection (4) to the date the payment is made.

- **Effect of payment**
 - (7) Upon receiving payment of all costs payable plus interest accrued to the date of payment, the City shall register a discharge of the lien in the proper land registry office.

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings

- Article 5 – Section 354-5.1 - Audits and regular site visits.

- A. The Executive Director is authorized to conduct routine site visits and pre-audits of all apartment buildings to determine whether they are in compliance with this chapter and any other City by-law, enforced by the Executive Director, and the owner or operator shall pay any fees in accordance with Chapter 441, Fees and Charges^{15,16}.
 - B. The Executive Director is authorized to audit apartment buildings that require further investigation, to re-inspect apartment buildings to confirm that the owners or operators are complying with any issued orders, to conduct targeted engagement visits in apartment buildings, and to take any other action necessary and authorized by law, and the owner or operator shall pay any fees in accordance with Chapter 441, Fees and Charges.
- Article 7 – Section 354-7.2 – Entry to inspect
 - A. In accordance with section 376 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, an officer may enter upon land within the City at any reasonable time for the purpose of carrying out inspections to determine whether the following are being complied with:
 - (1) This chapter; or
 - (2) A notice or order issued in accordance with this chapter.
 - B. For the purposes of an inspection under Subsection A, an officer may:
 - (1) Require, for inspection, the production of documents or things relevant to the inspection;
 - (2) Inspect and remove documents or things relevant to the inspection for the purpose of making copies or extracts of them;
 - (3) Require information from any person concerning a matter related to the inspection;
 - (4) Be accompanied by such person or persons as the officer determines is necessary if such person or persons possesses special or expert knowledge related to the purpose of the inspection; and
 - (5) Make examinations or take tests, samples or photographs necessary for the purposes of the inspection.
- Article 7 – Section 354-7.4 – Remedial action
 - If a person fails to comply with an order to do work to correct a contravention of this article, the Executive Director, or persons acting upon his or her instructions, may enter the lands at any reasonable time for the purposes of doing the things described in the order at the person's expense.

- Section 629-49.5 – Powers to Enter and Inspect
- A. An officer acting under this By-law may, at any reasonable time and upon producing proper identification, enter upon a property without a warrant for the purpose of inspecting the property to determine:
 - (1) whether the property conforms with the standards prescribed in this Chapter; or
 - (2) whether an order has been complied with.
- B. Despite Subsection A, an officer shall not enter or remain in any room or place actually used as a dwelling unless:
 - (1) the consent of the occupant is obtained, the occupant first having been informed that the right of entry may be refused and entry made only under the authority of a warrant issued under the Building Code;
 - (2) a warrant issued under the Building Code is obtained;
 - (3) the delay necessary to obtain the consent of the occupant or a warrant would result in immediate danger to the health or safety of any person; or
 - (4) the entry is necessary to terminate a danger under Subsection 15.7(3) of the Building Code.
- C. For the purposes of an inspection under subsection A, an officer may:
 - (1) require the production for inspection of documents or things, including drawings or specifications, that may be relevant to the property or any part of the property;
 - (2) inspect and remove documents or things relevant to the property or part of the property for the purpose of making copies or extracts;
 - (3) require information from any person concerning a matter related to a property or part of the property;
 - (4) be accompanied by a person who has special or expert knowledge in relation to a property or part of a property;
 - (5) alone or in conjunction with a person possessing special or expert knowledge, make examinations or take tests, samples or photographs necessary for the purposes of the inspection; and
 - (6) order the owner of the property to take and supply at the owner's expense such tests and samples as are specified in the order.