

Section 2 Council Correspondence 2019.10.24

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2019 11:27 AM
To: Mayor <Mayor@burnaby.ca>; Clerks <Clerks@burnaby.ca>
Cc: editorial@burnabynow.com; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Open Letter to Burnaby Mayor Hurley and Council Re: Yearly Rental House Licence and Supplementary Utilities Fees

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Dear Burnaby Mayor Hurley and Council,

I am writing to you to reconsider your positions on imposing the yearly rental house licence to landlords and supplementary utilities fees to homeowners. I did not hear about this until I attended the meeting with Voices of Burnaby Seniors. Shortly thereafter, I received the notice in the mail. The letter is a shock to me because it does not give landlords and homeowners the time to plan. There should have been an open forum and more information sessions organized by the city. This event should have been well advertised to reach as many concerned citizens as possible. There was nothing in the local newspapers until after Council has passed the motion at the October 07, 2019 meeting. I wanted to read the minutes of the council meeting regarding this matter thru the city's website. I was informed by city clerk that, it could not be accessed until the minutes are approved at the November 28, 2019 council meeting.

Canada is not a dictatorial country by any means and not the Canada that I have come to know. The notice does not give landlords and homeowners reasonable time to respond by deadline of November 30, 2019. To make matters worst, there is a threat of \$ 1,000.00 penalty, if the demand by the city to submit the declaration is not adhered to. Again, this is not democratic.

The required yearly licence to rental house has not been transparent. Landlords need to be informed why the yearly house rental licencing is imposed by January 2020 and what is required before and after the said licence is applied for. I have contacted the City clerk and licensing departments as soon as I got the notice. I was told that they could not help me but to send back the declaration by deadline of November 30, 2019 or face the \$1,000.00 penalty. This left a bad taste in my mouth. This has also caused a lot of anxiety and concern to me. I want to make an informed decision as to what to do with my rental house.

I have also contacted the Residential Tenancy office. I was planning to evict my tenants with the two months notice effective December 31, 2019. I was advised to make sure a family member can move in or a new buyer is established as per Residential Tenancy Act. I am in a standstill. I am sure, I am not alone.

Owning a rental house in Burnaby did not come easy for me as an immigrant. The property was acquired not by inheritance but through hard work. I worked three jobs, one full time and two casual jobs as a Registered Nurse, to pay the mortgage, property taxes, utilities, pay CRA the rental income, house insurance and have funds for roof, gutters, hot water, furnace, appliances, be it for repair costs and / or replacements.

Copied to:
City Manager
Dir. Corporate Services
Dir. Planning and Building
Dir. Public Safety and Community Services
Dir. Finance

Referred to:
Financial Management Committee
(2019.11.20)

The profit margin for a rental house is almost nil. The only consolation is to have something to sell down the road to supplement my fixed income and to pay for my expenses be it medical, all my therapies, high costs of living, transportation and hopefully to maintain quality of life until the end. I don't want to be a burden to the Canadian government and society as a whole. Many seniors are living below poverty lines, surviving on macaroni and cheese, canned beans, day old bread and digging through discounted grocery bins. This is Canada, a first world country !!!

Some homeowners, especially seniors or with medical challenges need tenants for companionships and to help out around the house. Many students need affordable housing. In fact, the city should give incentive to these homeowners who can directly and indirectly play a role in helping solve homelessness.

The population in Burnaby has exploded. It is advertised as a desirable city to live. The city is trying to build affordable housing but it takes time because of negotiations with different levels of government who is passing the buck, back and forth, as to who is responsible to solve homelessness. Many of the people I knew have passed, some have become more ill, waiting for BC Housing Registry to offer them a place to live.

I have supported your party, the campaign and all programs on homelessness. I feel with this new rental house licence the rental stock in Burnaby will be depleted. Many landlords will no longer rent. This would also mean getting a " business insurance " for the rental house. The reported 1,900 homeowners who got reimbursed for the stove tax used to rent their houses. Some of them were my neighbours, family, friends and acquaintances. Renting is not for the faint of heart with so many regulations between the Residential Tenancy and city government. This has contributed to homelessness. I try to support and understand my tenants who have financial and medical challenges.

Burnaby has more than enough revenue in city coffer. This is well known and in fact, this has been reported in the news. There is always an increase in yearly property taxes and utilities even with these positive revenue. Many of us seniors for decades have come to asked the city to give us a break not to raise taxes but it fell on deaf ears.

Please, reach out to the provincial and federal government for the necessary funding on homelessness. All levels of government have committed themselves to assist. It is a nationwide concern and a hot topic during our recent election.

Please do not impose on the Burnaby landlords and homeowners the yearly rental licence fee and supplemental utilities fees. We are paying enough through taxes and fees to help Burnaby achieve their projects to tackle homelessness. At the same token, landlords have been paying the necessary taxes with the rental income to Canadian Revenue Agency.

According to one researcher on homelessness and I quote, " We need to use " lateral thinking " to solve city's housing problems."

All your efforts are much appreciated. Thank you !

Sincerely,

Jesusita Barrios

