

B.3

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. Increase Protection for Renters (VanRIMS No. 01-5500-20)

MOVER: Councillor Tim Stevenson

SECONDER: Councillor Heather Deal

WHEREAS funding cuts have made the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) and Dispute Resolution processes inaccessible to tenants;

WHEREAS there are renters who are signing voluntary rent increase letters above and beyond the legislated cap of 4% per year rent increases;

WHEREAS tenants are being evicted from their homes by landlords for cosmetic renovations to their suites;

WHEREAS some of the residents evicted from these buildings will be unable to find appropriate accommodation and will add to those already living on the street;

WHEREAS landlords are using loopholes in the Residential Tenancy Act to force renters from their homes in order to obtain massive rent increases far beyond the legislated 4% per year rent increases;

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has closed most Residential Tenancy Offices across BC, leaving just two offices to serve BC's one million tenants, and only one office to serve landlord/tenant disputes in the Lower Mainland;

WHEREAS a lack of rental housing exacerbates Vancouver's labour shortage, particularly in neighbourhoods like the West End;

WHEREAS between 2003 and 2005, despite the development of 99 new units, the city incurred a net loss of 415 housing units for low-income singles;

WHEREAS the City lost almost 400 units of low-income housing due to conversions, rent increases, and closures between June 2005 and June 2006;

WHEREAS in the last three months, the City has seen the closure of the Phoenix Apartments, the apartment building at 334 Carrol, the Dominion Hotel, Marie Gomez Place, and the Backpackers Inn;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government does not keep track of evictions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The City of Vancouver immediately request the Provincial Government to:
 - Re-establish a Residential Tenancy Office within the City of Vancouver in the West End;
 - Amend Section 49 of the Residential Tenancy Act to allow for renters to have the right of first refusal with their original rent;
 - Lengthen the period of time for notice of evictions from 60 to 90 days;

2. City staff report back on developing:
 - A publicly accessible database to monitor evictions throughout the city, as well as conversions to student housing, and buildings protected under the SRA regulations;
 - An anti-vacancy by-law, which would increase levels of taxation on vacant properties being held for the purposes of speculation;
 - A program for twice-yearly standards of maintenance inspections of all occupied rental housing listed in the City of Vancouver Single Room Accommodation By-law Schedule;
 - The consideration of past compliance with building standards and owner history when granting new development permits;
 - A DTES planning office, whose sole responsibility would be to inform local residents of planned developments, and facilitate meaningful community participation in neighbourhood development.

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