

MOTION ON NOTICE

10. Protecting SRO Rooms in the Clifton Hotel

At the Regular Council meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2014, Vancouver City Council referred this motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on Wednesday, December 17, 2014, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Carr
SECONDED by Councillor De Genova

WHEREAS

1. There is a crisis in affordable housing in Vancouver for those at the lowest income levels who receive welfare shelter rate allowance of \$375 per month for rent, many of whom live in the Downtown Eastside (DTES);
2. Vancouver had its highest homeless count ever this year and SROs are the last resort before homelessness;
3. The supply of housing at the shelter allowance rent—SROs in the DTES and downtown core—has precipitously declined. According to recent unpublished Carnegie Action Project research 78 percent of privately owned DTES hotel rooms rent for \$425 and more, with 22 of SRO hotels having rents that are \$500 or more and 9 with rents that are \$700 or more, exacerbating the homeless crisis;
4. The Clifton Hotel, an SRO hotel on Granville Street, has been deteriorating for many years due to failure by the landlord to regularly undertake necessary maintenance and cleaning and is currently in major disrepair, despite some work done recently under a Standards of Maintenance order, with tenants living in unsafe, unclean and pest-infested conditions;
5. Major repairs are now required and proposed by the owner of the Clifton Hotel, resulting in most of the hotel's 74 rooms being now vacant and many of the residents of the 25 to 27 rooms that are currently occupied at a rent of \$425 per month, accepting payment in exchange for ending their tenancy without a right of return upon completion of renovations by the landlord;
6. Paragraph 1.2(e) of the *Single Room Accommodation Bylaw*, No. 8733 defines "conversion" as "(e) a repair or alteration to a designated room or any improvement or fixture in it or a replacement of any such improvement or fixture, except for repairs or alterations that are minor in nature and have no material effect on the enjoyment by permanent residents of their living accommodation";

7. The proposed renovations will have a material effect on the enjoyment by permanent residents of the Clifton, specifically by ending their tenancies and will allow the landlord to raise the rent by any amount following renovations, materially changing the occupancy of the building; and will allow the landlord to profit from his failure to properly maintain the Clifton by ending the tenancies of long-term tenants.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

1. THAT staff identify and report back on all options that would allow the City to require comprehensive tenant relocation plans from owners when work on SRA designated properties would result in tenants being temporarily or permanently displaced, and that such plans focus on relocation or return to housing at the same rental rate.
2. THAT staff also report back on opportunities to maintain affordability and protect tenant rights in SRA properties through amending the SRA By-law or by other means.
3. THAT staff report back by the end of March, 2015.

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