

**Dragnea, Irina**

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**From:** Chris Bruntlett s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  
**Sent:** Monday, July 16, 2018 8:37 PM  
**To:** Public Hearing  
**Subject:** 5811 Main Street Rezoning Application

Chris and Melissa Bruntlett  
s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

Mayor and Council  
City of Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
[publichearing@vancouver.ca](mailto:publichearing@vancouver.ca)

Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

**Re: Support for 5811 Main Street (Tomo House) Rezoning Application**

I am writing to support the proposed cohousing lite project at 5811 Main Street.

**Scale and neighbourhood fit:** The proposed project's scale is appropriate for its location and it fits well with the neighbourhood. Its 3-storey form on a double lot is appropriate. The proposed project is across the street from a 4-storey apartment building and next to 2-storey houses. It is an example of the small scale multi-family housing projects that we need more of in Vancouver's low-density neighbourhoods.

**Intergenerational community:** The proposed project supports a multi-generational community by having unit types ranging from studios to 3-bedrooms. It is important that our neighbourhood and our city have housing choices for diverse family types.

**Cohousing:** A cohousing project with its focus on neighbours knowing one another is great for the neighbourhood. I like the idea of neighbours helping neighbours.

**Bike and car sharing:** I further support the project because of the attention it gives to bikes and car sharing.

Sincerely,

Chris and Melissa Bruntlett

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Mayor and Council  
City of Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
publichearing@vancouver.ca

17 July 2018

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

**Re: Support for 5811 Main Street (Tomo House) Rezoning Application**

I am writing to support the proposed cohousing lite project at 5811 Main Street. This project is innovative and important for Vancouver.

Everyone in Vancouver is well aware of the housing issues in our beautiful and much-desired City. The housing in Vancouver has a certain level of complexity that it no longer admits one single solution. Vancouver would benefit from intense learning of a wide range of approaches to address the needs of, and solve the issues around, diverse requirements. I found the Tomo Housing concept that is proposed for 5811 Main Street such a project that is worthy of support and promises valuable learning for our City.

I personally first became aware of this project when Tomo Housing approached me to hold their public/neighbourhood meetings at the Community Centre that I helped manage at 5880 Main Street. I interviewed the representatives of the project in order to determine the benefit of the project and ensuring that we are hosting projects that contribute to the wellbeing of the neighbourhood rather than making it further inaccessible. I was impressed by the quality of people at Tomo, their intentions, and their genuine search for viable solutions for our City—characteristics that are all too often missing in property development. Since then, we have hosted two public meetings for Tomo Housing at our community centre.

I am personally very happy to endorse the project at 5811 Main Street. It is in the immediate neighbourhood of our community centre. I feel it will contribute to the betterment of our neighbourhood.

In addition, I also endorse the following:

**1. Missing Middle**

Tomo House is an example of the small scale multi-family housing projects that we need more of in Vancouver. Its 3-storey form on a double lot is appropriate for the site which is adjacent to a 3 and 4-storey apartment buildings and 2-storey houses. This building is proposed to be built to Passive House standards, which will contribute greatly to the local know how on applications to multi-family projects.

## **2. Cohousing Lite**

In addition to a scalable building form, OUV and Tomo Spaces are pioneering a new model called “cohousing lite” to make cohousing development easier and with less risk for members. Typically, a cohousing community would purchase land, design the building, and hire all the professionals required for construction. Unfortunately, the process is an arduous one taking many years and often failing. This is especially true in pricey Vancouver with limited land options.

In the cohousing lite model, Tomo will act as the lead developer. Cohousing lite is an innovative way to accelerate the creation of more cohousing in Vancouver.

## **3. Affordable homeownership**

Housing affordability is a challenge in Vancouver. The proposed development includes 3 below-market units for homeownership, priced at 35% below market. These units will have a price-restriction covenant to peg future resale price to a regional income index to ensure affordability in perpetuity. These units are critical to the creation of a diverse and affordable neighbourhood.

## **4. Highly Energy Efficient Passive House**

According to the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, commercial and residential buildings emit 44% of the total green house gas emissions. Passive House buildings can greatly reduce emission amounts as they typically consume 70-80% less energy than a conventional build. Currently there are very few Passive House projects being built at the Missing Middle scale. I am excited that Tomo House showcases that Passive House projects can be built at this scale in Vancouver. Passive Houses can and should be built in all heights and forms.

This multi-family housing project contributes greatly to Vancouver. It is innovative in pioneering cohousing lite, affordable housing ownership, its small-scale density and Passive House design. Our community is looking forward to making this unique project a reality. I hope that you will support this rezoning application.

Sincerely,

Foad Shodjai

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**Dragnea, Irina**

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**From:** Kevin Millsip s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 17, 2018 2:20 PM  
**To:** Public Hearing  
**Subject:** In favour of Tomo House from Kevin Millsip

July 17, 2018

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

**Via email**

**Re: Support for 5811 Main Street (Tomo House) Rezoning Application**

I am writing to ask for your support for the proposed project at 5811 Main Street. I am a member of Our Urban Village (OUV), the cohousing group that will be the future residents of this cohousing lite community.

I will speak briefly to two elements of the Tomo House proposal, community and affordability. What initially attracted me to this project, was the prospect of building a community with a great group of people where we could live together in a city that is increasingly unaffordable, and, in which isolation and lack of community is a growing concern. Our desire as a group is to be able live in a community that is, among other things, multi-generational in nature.

As Council members knows well, affordable housing is harder and harder to come by for many Vancouverites. For young working families with children, affordable housing can mean the difference between living in the city, or moving elsewhere. In the case of Tomo House, the enhanced affordability component of the project is one more mechanism that the city can use, amongst an array of tools, to provide more affordable housing options for the cities residents.

Without the enhanced affordability units, the families with children who are part of the OUV community will not be able to take part in the project, be part of the community, or perhaps even remain in the city to raise their families.

Tomo House can play a small part in building both more communal and affordable housing options within the city. I hope that Council will support this application.

Sincerely,

Kevin Millsip

July 17, 2018

Mayor and Council  
City of Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
publichearing@vancouver.ca

**Re: Support for 5811 Main Street (Tomo House) Rezoning Application**

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing today to encourage you to support staff's recommendation to approve Tomo's rezoning application. Tomo's model could offer our region remarkable opportunities to address our dual challenges of housing affordability and social isolation. It could also help provide a much-needed supply of gentle density to help strengthen neighbourhoods in our city.

To disclose potential conflicts of interest, I would like to understand more about my background and my connections with this project.

Since January of this year, I have had the honour to serve on the Vancouver City Planning Commission to convene public dialogue and to advise you on critical issues affecting the future of our city. But I am not writing here on behalf of the commission. I am writing to you because I have a significant professional and personal connection with the Tomo House.

In April of this year, I took a position with the Vancity Community Foundation to support the development of affordable housing and community facilities. Up until now, my colleagues and I have not seen many viable models for the creation of affordable home ownership like the one Tomo is trying to pilot.

Previous to my role with Vancity, I directed the Happy City team, and in the last couple of years, I managed our partnership with Tomo. Through this work, I realized that this project represents an exciting future for the creation of affordable and sociable, missing middle housing. I am so passionate about this work that I also wanted to make this my home. About a year ago I became a member of Our Urban Village, the co-housing community that will live in Tomo. Together with my fellow co-housers, I have been helping build a supportive, multigenerational community.

Building on this knowledge and personal experience in relation to this project, I want to highlight a couple of key benefits of that Tomo offers.

## **Development Approach**

Despite having a high demand for more collective forms of housing in our region, most co-housing groups fail to see a development process through completion. They are simply unable to navigate the complexity of undertaking a multifamily housing development. They are also faced with prohibitive costs for land and construction. On the other hand, with Co-housing Lite, a partnership with an experienced developer can be the key to deliver more of these homes. An established developer capable to take on the risk of buying the land, designing the building and obtaining the permitting and financing required to complete this kind of project.

Tomo's design is an interesting model that takes two single-family lots and provides an efficient and well-designed example of missing middle housing. This type of land assembly is more accessible to small developers and single-family home owners. With suitable policies and resources, citizens could be empowered to collaborate with their neighbours, friends and families to build the kind of housing they need in their neighbourhood.

## **Affordability**

The affordable homeownership component of this project is so important for our city. Even for me as a single professional who works to support the development of affordable housing, I am not certain that I can save and borrow sufficient capital to buy a home in Tomo. I am not alone. Without options to attain affordable home ownership, many families will continue to rely on unsecured and escalating rental markets. After being forced to move several times without the security to build equity through homeownership, you wonder whether it is at all possible and wise to stay in city that does not seem to have a place for you.

Another important factor in affordability is the cost of construction. To help us bear reasonable costs, I respectfully ask that the service and infrastructure upgrade required for rezoning be proportionate to the scale of the project. A small 12-unit multi-family project should not bear the same upgrades as large, even medium, condo projects.

These costs matter. Last month, we lost one of our founding families due to escalating costs during the rezoning. It was terribly sad see that even with two substantial professional incomes, our friends couldn't fulfill the dream they pursued for their family for more than three years. Our friends earned too much to qualify for the proposed affordability thresholds in Tomo, but not enough to buy a home in Vancouver's market.

## **Resilience**

When we talk about the benefits of collective forms of housing, we aren't just talking about potlucks, walking school buses, book clubs and block parties. We are talking more broadly about building supportive social and physical infrastructure. Think for a minute of the most devastating earthquake that you can imagine. Growing up in Mexico City I have experienced the collective chaos and the terrible loss brought about by a city-wide tragedy like an earthquake.

Think, for example, that the structural core of Tomo's common house (and similar facilities in the city) could be designed to adapt and serve as a temporary shelter in the case of an emergency. This infrastructure alongside co-housing's focus on cooperation and mutual support are precisely the ingredients that allow a neighbourhood to get back on its feet after a substantial shock.

## **CONCLUSION**

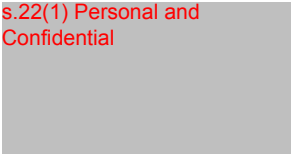
In summary I wholeheartedly encourage you to do everything you can to allow us to build this exciting community and a model for the rest of our city.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Omar Dominguez,  
Strategic Advisor, Impact Real Estate – Vancity Community Foundation  
Member – Our Urban Village

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Confidential

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