

MOTION

8. Rent Forgiveness Program

At the Council meeting on October 6, 2020, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on October 7, 2020, to hear from speakers.

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver's Renters Advisory Committee has been watching City and Provincial support for renters closely during the COVID-19 State of Emergency in BC;
2. Many renters have lost income during this time, and as a result have struggled to pay their rent, and that this is particularly true in Vancouver, where according to the 2016 census 35% of renter households spend 30-99% of their income on housing;
3. The Committee is thankful that the BC government has announced (to date) that they will continue to ban evictions for non-payment of rent until August 31st, however, despite both provincial and federal financial assistance programs, there are many renters in Vancouver who are struggling to pay for housing (while also paying for other necessities);
4. Rents have not been forgiven, only delayed, even for those hardest hit by the pandemic;
5. Due to unemployment, among other factors, many renters will not be able to pay the accrued rent amount once the eviction ban is lifted, even with a provincial payment plan in place;
6. Loans from a "rent bank" to cover arrears, which must be paid back, can also put many renters at risk of ruinous rent debt through no fault of their own; and
7. The Renters' Advisory Committee has asked its liaison councillors to bring forward this resolution.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council ask the Mayor to advocate for a rent forgiveness program to the Government of British Columbia for those who cannot pay their full rent due to financial impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic;

FURTHER THAT accrual of further debt through "rent banks" are acknowledged as an unacceptable solution to missed rent payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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