

Quick Update - Landlord Licensing.

HRM's Landlord Licensing consultation process is completed. A final Stantec roundtable focus group meeting that included, HRM staff, IPOANS, Tenants, Outreach Workers and representatives from Tenant Advocacy Organization and Affordable Housing Groups took place Tuesday, May 16th. Stantec's next step is creating a report with recommendations scheduled for a fall 2017 presentation to City Council.

After much discussion and debate at the May 16th focus group, a consensus emerged that *"Landlord Licensing was not the correct approach in rectifying bylaw noncompliance issues currently confronting landlords, tenants and HRM Bylaw Enforcement."* That said there was also a general consensus that there are bylaw noncompliance issues confronting both landlords and tenants that must be addressed.

Key issues requiring attention:

- **Identify Current HRM Bylaw Protocol Gaps** – Analyses required identifying bylaw protocol gaps encumbering complaint response times and follow-up. Once gaps are identified, determine required resources to implement an action plan.
- **Education** - Development of a sustained print and web based tenant rights and landlord obligations education strategy, written in easy understandable layman terminology.
- **Rental Database** – A recommendation put forward was for HRM to develop a low cost rental database identifying all residential rental properties in HRM. Rental properties will be required to register annually. IPOANS requested more information from Stantec. HRM currently operates an internal legal use of property database therefore we do not understand the need for a second database.
- **Property Inspection Triggers** - Properties with high volume HPD and or 311 complaint calls trigger and prioritize building inspections.
- **Outreach Workers** - HRM should research hiring outreach workers to assist low-income tenants with landlord complaints and, where required, advocate on their behalf and assist in navigating NSRTB hearing process.
- **Affordability** - Current DCS housing entitlements and OAS/CPP payments do not meet the needs of low-income tenants or landlords serving the low-income market. More discussions required with appropriate authorities to increase current housing entitlement rates and or increasing the number of rent supplements.
- **Stakeholders** - Stakeholder group must increase members to include representatives from the Province (NSRTB, DCS), Universities, NSCC and Halifax Regional Police.

Being a political driven process, it is premature to say HRM will not follow through with a Landlord Licensing program. However, given the meeting's collaborative atmosphere in finding solutions combined with a unanimous "No" outcome leads me to be cautiously optimistic HRM landlords will not be confronted with similar landlord licensing programs implemented in some Ontario jurisdictions.

Updates will be sent out as events unfold. In the meantime I'm available at any time to answer questions or address concerns.

Regards,
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