

Walter, Penny

From: City Council
Subject: FW: Email - Request to Speak - Erin Lashta - Housing Accelerator Fund - CK 750-1

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 4:21 AM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Request to Speak - Erin Lashta - Housing Accelerator Fund - CK 750-1

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED]

Submitted on Monday, June 24, 2024 - 02:12

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Monday, June 24, 2024

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Erin

Last Name: Lashta

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] silverwood rd

Ward: Ward 5

What do you wish to do ?: Request to Speak

If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely: In person

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: June 27 HAF Special Meeting

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Items 1-4.

Comments:

I have serious concerns on public engagement and lack of answers on how concerns raised by residents about potential unintended policy consequences are being addressed. Especially as it seems part of the federal funds have already been received - and am assuming there were strings attached to those funds. It really gives the appearance that the decision had been made already and that the "vote" this Thursday is performative and will go through regardless of concerns raised by citizens.

The proposed changes are significant and there will inevitably be unintended policy consequences, for example:

- parking congestion

- waste and water issues

- trees & privacy & light in yards

- I need to research this more but it logically follows that housing affordability will go out the window, if "developers" are buying up "infill" properties and turning them into rentals. Developers, in particular incorporated developers, have much higher capacity to borrow money so sellers can set a higher price knowing that developers will snap up a lot to put up 4-plexes / apartments as a "business opportunity" making it impossible for people with lower income to purchase homes and build equity. This also leaves these lower income families having to put most of their income in the pocket of a landlord rather than investing in their own asset. I know there's been a huge spike of small business owners being advised to buy up homes as "rental opportunities" to lower the amount of tax they have to pay on company profits that they used to leave sit in their corporations. Then there are individuals who owned homes and have good credit built up with the banks are beginning to buy up houses to create "passive income", that individuals or family's still need to rent, and again don't build their own equity/asset. Combine that with the fact that just this year an individuals are apparently no longer able to access their RRSPs to use as a down payment as first time homebuyers - so instead of being able to buy something themselves, families are left at the mercy of landlords, who then have them pay a high rental cost, and combined with the high cost of living means they can't save. Is this what our city council want for families in Saskatoon? I don't want to live in a city where only corporations or upper middle/rich families can own a home - like Toronto, or Vancouver, or Calgary. Homeownership shouldn't only be accessible to the rich because developers are given all the breaks / incentives to outbid families & buy up all the "infill" lots.

Frankly, this plan doesn't seem address affordable or stable housing for average Saskatoon resident, or those that struggle with housing instability. Instead it seems that Saskatoon is taking the opportunity to own homes from residents and instead giving developers the opportunity to make profits. In part this seems to be driven by the appearance of "not enough rentals" BUT "not enough rentals" is due in part to an influx of University/SK Polytechnic students from Sept - April. Again, is it the right move for city council to take the opportunity to own homes from individuals/families to give rental opportunities to University students rather than pushing for the University to provide affordable housing for students? Especially when you consider the fact that many students leave Saskatoon as soon as they're done with their degrees.

At the end of the day, the practical realities and housing goals of individuals who intend to make Saskatoon their home long term need to be considered, cannot be accurately determined if there is limited public engagement. While increasing population density in some way is necessary to beat urban sprawl - more thoughtful consideration must be given to who these changes actually benefit, and if this is the right move for Saskatoon residents.

It's also of note that Saskatoon residents have different concerns than those in cities like Vancouver, Calgary, or Toronto - we live in a very different climate, our residents and students come from different places (ie, many people move here from rural SK communities - that cannot be accessed except by personal vehicles), and there are challenges within our city that need to be considered before implementing a cookie cutter plan that "works" for Toronto, Vancouver, or Calgary. Especially given the fact that NONE of those cities are examples of places that have good/desirable rental/housing markets, for any resident- but least of all families.

There must be ways to address the "housing crisis", without turning Saskatoon into Toronto, Vancouver, or Calgary. City Councillors have an obligation to ensure that residents in ALL neighbourhoods know what's going on and

provide answers to residents when they raise concerns - because even plans with the best intentions can go wrong and once changes are made they won't be able to be reeled back in. This isn't "adding compost" this is changing our entire city.

Lastly, I do not think it's appropriate for major residential changes to be voted on by councillors/a mayor who are not running for re-election. This should be an election issue, and city council should vote NO and run on this issue.

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No