

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

With the reappearance in the City of Winnipeg Council Chamber of some condo related issues, we started to receive some letters to the editor from our members. If you would like to send in your own letter for possible publication in our newsletter, you can do so by sending it to us a cci.mb.news@gmail.com with a subject of "Letters to the Editor".

SOBER SECOND THOUGHT NEEDED RE STRS

It seems to me that when Winnipeg's City Councilors voted against the primary-residence-only short-term rental (STR) model, they are not giving sufficient weight to the negative impacts that non-owner-occupied STRs can have on quality of life issues like safety and security in apartment and condo buildings. These are, after all, people's homes.

Nor, do they appear to be factoring in how STRs can significantly devalue the sizable investments condo dwellers made in their homes.

Other major cities in Canada, including Toronto, chose to limit STRs to principal residences for good reason, yet Winnipeg decision-makers have so far chosen not to follow suit. Perhaps, then, it's time for some sober second thought.

The original business model for airbnb was that people would rent out all or part of their principal residence for short periods of time to visitors to their city. It wasn't intended to become an "industry" run out of other people's homes as is the case when non-owner-occupied STRs operate in multi-family buildings.

People like me who live in condo buildings alongside units that operate as STRs have advocated tirelessly for the primary residence model because, otherwise, we are forced to live among strangers on a daily basis, and with an ongoing threat to safety and security. Plus, the constant coming and going causes wear and tear and outright property damage that we must pay for, while owners of the STR units profit off our backs.

It's a clear win-lose proposition – a very few benefitting at the expense of many.

If the City of Winnipeg really wants more people to live downtown, then the last thing Council should be doing is allowing short-term rentals (STRs) to flourish in the heart of our city. Allowing ghost hotels to operate in people's homes provides zero benefit for downtown residents and is detrimental to building strong urban communities. The only winners in this case are the few who own and operate one or more non-owner-occupied STRs.

How the mayor and council could justify and consider legitimizing the operation of such a problematic business in multi-family dwellings is beyond me. A hotel-like commercial operation that tramples on residents' rights to safety, security and quality of life should not be allowed in anyone's home. Full stop.

LAURIE N.

EAST EXCHANGE CONDO DWELLER AND STR PRIMARY-RESIDENCE-ONLY ADVOCATE

MULTI-FAMILY WASTE DIVERSION FEE BACK AT COUNCIL

In the article Brian Mayes, City Councillor for St. Vital and Chair of the Water and Waste Committee spoke to the issue. Mayes said he still prefers to see property tax revenues cover garbage and recycling services, but believes other options may need to be considered, stating "My inclination would be still to try and do it through property taxes ..."

I wrote to Brian Mayes on the behalf of WCC #329:

As a condo, we get no garbage collection from the City, we pay a third party for that service; we get no snow clearing, we pay a third party for that service. Our owners wonder what services our significant property tax bills pay for.

We agree with your position that garbage and recycling should be a service paid through property taxes. There is a robust system in place for assessment and collection of property taxes. A separate Recycling / Waste Recovery fee would mean an additional accounting system and staff to bill, collect and enforce this fee.

If there were to be a Recycling / Waste Recovery fee, we would submit that it be based on the number of Recycling bins. Homeowners pay \$66 per year for that service, typically servicing 1 bin per household. We contend that a fair fee for that service would be a maximum of \$66/bin. We have 10 bins at 60/70 Dunkirk Dr, that service 52 units, resulting in an annual fee of \$660. There is an economy of scale in play here as well, the collection staff don't have to travel along the street to collect 10 bins, they are all in one location.

We submit that it would be in the City's best interest to encourage recycling & waste recovery, but a new fee would not be a step in that direction.

GRANT K., BOARD PRESIDENT WCC #329

ROYAL EDGEWATER CONDOMINIUMS 🍁