PRESENTATION

TO

THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE, MARCH 19, 2020

RE:

THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE GARBAGE BIN COLLECTION FOR MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT BUILDINGS AND CONDOMINIUMS

PRESENTED
BY
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PRESENTATION TO THE CITY OF WINNIPEG EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2020

INTRODUCTION

His Worship Mayor Bowman, Chairperson, and Councillors, thank you for accommodating our request to present today. We express our appreciation to you and all councillors for your commitment of time and talent to better the lives of the citizens of the City of Winnipeg.

My name is Robert (Dom) Wilkins, President of Oxbow of Tuxedo Point Condominium Corporation No. 958, 775 Sterling Lyon Parkway. Accompanying me today are condominium directors David Smith and Victor Bester.

Our presentation is relative to the proposal to discontinue the City pickup of garbage and recycling from multi-family condominium and apartment buildings.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to prove through logic and reason that the only fair and just decision the Winnipeg City Council can make is to reject this proposal.

We present the following rationale for your consideration:

1. Discontinuation of the collection of garbage and recycling by The City of Winnipeg will exasperate an already Property Tax System that discriminates against condominium owners and apartment building renters.

The City of Winnipeg calculates the taxes for individual condominium units the same way it does for single family dwellings, with no consideration for the smaller footprint of condo properties and the fewer City services already being provided.

For example, our condominium property has a total footprint of approximately 450ft X 250ft. This space includes a five-storey building with 84 condo units, outdoor parking, a street, sidewalks, and a small amount of green space. The City assessed value of our condos for property taxation calculation ranges from $210,000 to $420,000, with a total appraised value of $25,240,000 for 84 units.

Property taxes for each unit are calculated with the same mill rate and same frontage levies as if each were a single detached house.

With respect to services, the Oxbow of Tuxedo Point Condominium Corporation maintains our own roads, sidewalks, trees, fire hydrants, sewers and water mains, and pays for our own snow clearing. These costs are passed on to unit owners in the form of monthly condominium fees.

In comparison, if a city street were placed through the centre of our property, and assuming a 40ft frontage per house, the property would possibly accommodate a maximum of 22 single family houses. This is 62 (84-22) fewer properties and the property taxes the City would collected would decrease proportionally.

In spite of the City receiving far less taxes, it would assume responsibility to provide and pay for all of the services named above, clearly demonstrating the inequity of the Winnipeg Property Tax System. A system that favors single family home owners and discriminating against condominium unit owners.

According to the Manitoba Chapter of the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI-MB), requiring Condominium Corporations to now pick up the tab for garbage collection will add $150 to $250 per year to fees charged to each unit owner. If the proposed service cuts also include collection of recycling materials, it will double that cost.

It may be concluded that condominium buildings are a cash cow for property taxes for the City. Further reducing services to residents of such lucrative taxation properties is unjustifiable. Fairness and equity requires that the City increase services for condominium owners, or reduce taxes.

2. **A further reduction of services to apartment buildings and condominiums will unwittingly result in an increase in the cost of living for low income families and senior citizens.**

As you are fully aware, a reduction in City garbage and recycling collection services will lead to an increase in rent and condominium fees to purchase these services from private contractors.

Many apartment buildings and condominiums are occupied by low income families and senior citizens. These families can't afford another arbitrary increase in the cost of living.

We submit to you that it is unconscionable for City Council to treat some of our most vulnerable citizens in such a discriminatory fashion.

3. Tuxedo Point Development is an example of support for the City of Winnipeg's objective to curb urban sprawl and maximize taxation by in-filling of vacant or underutilized land with multi-family housing.

The land occupied by Tuxedo Point was a former "Piggy Back" Yard owned by Canadian National Railway (CNR). Changes to CNR's operations resulted in the yard no longer being used and the land lay vacant for a number of years.

Today, part of this land, known as Tuxedo Point, consists of six high rise multi-family buildings with a seventh under construction. When completed and occupied by the spring of 2021, Tuxedo Point will be home to more than 1300 residents.

It seems ironic that you now propose to punish the citizens that support your worthwhile initiative by reducing services you provide to these citizens. In fact, we submit that it defies logic.

4. The continuation of unfair taxation of condominium owners may prove counterproductive to the stated desire of all levels of government to improve sustainability and mitigate the risks of climate change.

Condominiums support higher population density, which reduces the number of streets, bridges, parks and other infrastructure. Higher density residential housing with shared walls, floors and ceilings, reduces the amount of energy required for heating and cooling, thereby lowering the carbon footprint.

In addition, the gas emissions from a garbage truck emptying three or four large garbage bins from a single location at a condominium building is far less than the emissions from a garbage truck driving around a subdivision to collect the same amount of garbage from single detached homes.

Many of us who have purchased a condo in Oxbow of Tuxedo Point have done so because condo living offers a desired lifestyle without increasing our cost of living. However, with increased discriminatory taxation, a tipping point is being reached where continuing to live in a condominium is becoming more costly than living in a single family home. Such regressive taxation is a disincentive to condominium living and is counterproductive to a sustainable future.

Some of us have sold our larger houses in a subdivision in a conscious effort to live more sustainably and reduce our carbon footprint. We are disappointed that the City is now proposing to penalize us for being proactive in this worthwhile effort.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We draw the following conclusions and offer the following recommendations:

i. Based upon the arguments we have presented, we conclude that we have accomplished our objective and have proved to you through logic and reason that the proposal to discontinue the collection of garbage is an Illogical and irrational idea. To use an analogy, the proposal is not worth recycling and should go straight into the garbage bin.

We therefore recommend that City Council reject the proposal to discontinue the pickup of garbage and recycling materials from multi-family condominiums and apartment buildings.

We further recommend that the City of Winnipeg correct the injustice in services provided versus taxes collected from apartment building and condominium owners by increasing services equivalent to those provided to single family home owners. Alternatively, you could reduce our taxes.

ii. We conclude that the proposed reduction of City services to multi-family condominiums and apartment buildings is symptomatic of a much greater problem with the City of Winnipeg Property Tax System. The problem is systemic and a piecemeal approach such as the garbage proposal (pun intended) will only

exasperate the problem and accentuate discrimination against a significant number of taxpayers.

We recommend that City Council engage an outside agency to do a thorough study of the Winnipeg Property Taxation System with the objective of creating a fair and equable system that will reduce urban sprawl and encourage sustainability.

It will take courage and creative thinking to replace a broken taxation system, and we trust you have the courage to do so. A desired and sustainable future of this City depends upon your actions, and we wish you well.

Thank you for listening to our presentation.