February 25, 2023

Dear City of Winnipeg Council;

Please accept this letter as one of support to keep short-term rentals operating in Winnipeg. As a consumer of these services I would like to document my experience with this as well as indicate how, for myself and my family, the availability of this service meets our needs.

First of all, as a primary caregiver in a multi-generational family with diverse medical needs, I do have difficulty with finding adequate accommodations in the city. I have two family members who are battling diabetes and living in a home environment allows for me to prepare their meals and ensures that I could readily monitor their dietary consumption. Also, due to the rental of a home environment, I am able to attain accommodation that would give the members of my family their own spaces. For example, I have a five year old little girl, two teenage boys, myself and my husband, as well as my elderly mother that I need to secure short term living arrangements for while we are visiting in Winnipeg. The availability of short term rentals accommodate that the members of my family each have their own space in a way that hotels simply could not, aside from renting multiple rooms and figuring out how to ensure everyone's safety. From experience I can honestly say that adjoining rooms are difficult to acquire in Winnipeg, are costly, and still do not allow for much in the way of having personal space for anyone. My family and I do need to come to the city for work and medical reasons quite often and rely on these rentals to ensure that we are both comfortable and safe.

I would also like to add that for anyone who has experienced a necessity to have an extended stay in a place like Winnipeg that is not their home, living in hotels is not always the best experience and could contribute greatly to personal financial struggles. I was surprised at the cost difference between short-term rentals and hotel stays. To illustrate briefly, for a one week stay at a hotel in Winnipeg I would be spending at least $2800 for two rooms (provided I could find two that are adjoining so that my family would be properly supervised), costly meals from eating out at the very least twice daily, and alternating outings for the demographics incorporated within my own family so that everyone has at least some opportunity to meet their needs for entertainment without fighting over the single television set. Compare this with short-term rentals which may cost similarly or less than the hotel cost alone but also provides the comfort and space we all need and the opportunity to save money on meals by eating in. I am from an isolated community and Winnipeg is the only major center I have access to by plane. The fact that I have to pay nearly $1000 per plane ticket already makes each visit to the city a financial strain. For myself and others like me, this service provides us with support to get out of years of financial exploitation we have had no other choice but to endure.

As I mentioned, I am from a remote community in Northern Manitoba. I am First Nation and my life experiences visiting Winnipeg haven't always been very great. The reputation of this city being racist has been well earned. I have had several experiences with racism in the city in my lifetime and unfortunately it does continue. Living from this perspective, it is difficult to find ways to be comfortable. A victim of racism carries much emotional and mental turmoil. I understand that many First Nation people are struggling with having this identity and to be honest, having to live with the expectation that one is "lesser than" is not easy to overcome. Most do not. One of the things I enjoy about the short-term rental service being available is the connections I have made with the owners. Upon reflection I am overwhelmed with the blessings of relationships I have been able to make with those who provide that service with such great care and I have NEVER experienced being treated as a "lesser than" client.

In fact, I have come to realize that I am experiencing being valued as a person, welcomed as a guest, a person in need being accommodated. This experience has only been made possible in this city for me through the availability of short-term rentals and the relationships I have been able to build with the owners. For myself, in humble gratitude to someone opening their home to provide safety, security, accommodation, and comfort to my family I only see true reconciliation that is helping me move past the ugliness of the relationships between my identity and the mainstream society.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Feel free to contact me should you want to discuss this with me further.

Tanya Dawn McDougall

St. Theresa Point First Nation