

**Schedule 20 to the Minutes of
the Council Meeting for
Public Hearings held on
Monday, July 16, 2012.**

My name is Deirdre Whalen and I live at 13631 Blundell Road. I am here as a representative of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC). The PRC is fully in support of the City of Richmond's zoning amendment bylaw 8914 concerning a permit development for Polygon and Kiwanis Towers.

The property and dwellings owned and operated by the Richmond Kiwanis Senior Citizens Housing Society were built so long ago they are in active decline. I understand they are comprised of a number of self-contained bungalows as well as a two-story apartment block with no elevator. Seniors living there deserve better. We believe Kiwanis has worked hard with Polygon to deliver a project that will meet the needs of long-time residents as well as providing additional and much needed seniors' rental housing.

In order for an affordable housing project to be viable, we understand that in many cases a non-profit has to allow a developer to build market housing as well. This is the circumstance here, but to the credit of both Kiwanis and Polygon and with the assistance of the City of Richmond's affordable housing reserve fund they have reached agreement to provide more than one-to-one replacement of rental units. This means that not only will current residents have new suites but also other Richmond seniors seeking affordable rental units will be able to find housing here.

I would add that the City's website notes the population of Richmond is aging and the highest growth in the last few years has been in the 55-64 demographic. The PRC believes the City has to keep up with housing starts to accommodate the aging population and especially to house people that are low to moderate income. The cost of housing continues to rise while income levels stay static or even decline when you take into account the high cost of living in Metro Vancouver.

On a side note, the PRC recently hosted a speaker from the National Rental Housing Coalition. She stated that Metro Vancouver needs 6,500 new rental homes every year, yet in the past five years only 1,000 purpose-built rental units have been built. This means that people in Metro Vancouver are finding it more difficult to find affordable places to live. And if they are seniors on a limited budget it can be almost impossible.

In conclusion, Council will recall that the PRC was instrumental in advocating for the establishment of the Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy. In this light, we are pleased to see that the City of Richmond is committed to making affordable rental housing a priority. Their commitment is evidenced by their monetary contribution to the Kiwanis Towers project from the Affordable Housing Strategy reserve fund. Thank you and keep up the good work!