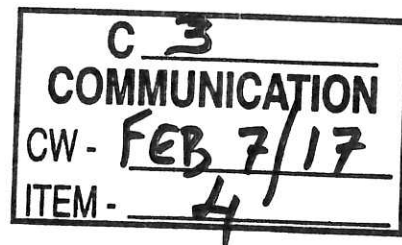


City of Vaughan

February 6, 2017



Dear Mayor, Members of Council and City Staff,

Re: Secondary Suites

I am writing today to urge the City of Vaughan to move forward immediately with the implementation of secondary suites as a matter of right in our City. It is long overdue.

In fact it is 8 years (!) since I came before Council and Committee of the Whole in 2009 with my colleagues Rev. Jim Keenan and Anna DeBartolo, to argue for the implementation of a secondary suites strategy that would ensure that this type of housing would be safe, legally available, and encouraged in our City.

In 2010 our Vaughan Social Action Council was promised a Task Force, which was finally moved forward with the passing of Bill 140 in the Province, in 2012, when secondary suites were legalized throughout Ontario as a matter of right. Over the next five years, a talented task force and consultants have worked on this long-delayed project.

So, I urge the City to get on with it. Please don't let another delay for technical/database or training purposes in early 2017 derail this any longer. Please stick firmly to the proposed implementation strategy laid out in the report for a 3Q implementation in 2017.

My comments on the report are as follows:

- (1) A solid consultant's report and overall strategy.
- (2) The communications plan needs to be more proactive to reach landlords and tenants and needs to have a social media and advertising component to consider:
 - a. Google ads when someone goes to list a property or search for "rent a basement apartment" in Vaughan
 - b. Advertising on common basement apartment rental vehicles such as:
 - i. Kijiji
 - ii. Craigslist
 - iii. Realtor.ca
 - iv. Trovit
 - v. Airbnb
 - vi. Vaughanlandlords.ca
 - vii. Etc....
 - c. An outreach plan to reach local real estate agents
 - d. A proactive phone campaign calling local landlords

- (3) The Building Permit process will be a barrier to registration of EXISTING suites – It is too complex, too time consuming and too expensive for most small households who are renting a basement trying to make ends meet. It is my view that we will need a simplified process just for secondary suites.
- The City of Vaughan building permit process requires substantial forms, technical drawings by a qualified designer...
 - Building Permit Fees - \$11-12 per m2.....that's \$552 just for a 500 sq foot apartment, not to mention perhaps handling fees (\$25), Written responses (\$115), Inspection fees (\$258), Compliance letters (\$144)
 - They have to hire an engineer to fill out the forms and do drawings and then have these fees on top of it....it will be a BIG BARRIER to successful registration of existing units.
- (4) Guelph offers a minimized/streamlined registration process to make it easier for landlords to achieve compliance and keep people safe. <http://guelph.ca/city-hall/planning-and-development/community-plans-studies/housing/shared-rental-housing/accessory-apartment-regulations/>
- (5) In order to encourage the safety (which is paramount) and registration of existing units (which is greatly desired), Vaughan should offer an "Existing Secondary Suites Amnesty Program" for the first 3-6 months of the program to encourage landlords to register their existing apartments without penalty or fee. During this period (as the City is already hiring 2 positions), Vaughan would waive all fees and offer a FREE fire/safety inspection. This would encourage people to come forward and have their existing units inspected and registered. It would also reduce staff time in the future from chasing down non-compliant suites.
- (6) Training of Staff- Guelph has a highly proactive system, as alluded to in the report, perhaps we could model on their approach and they could assist with our training.
- (7) The side yard setback to the door entrance for secondary suites is now set at 1.2 m in the proposed change to By law 1-88; perhaps this should be reduced? I'm not sure if this is meant to really eliminate townhomes, but it may eliminate side door options for many single family homes.

I am sorry that I cannot be there in person to make a deputation to Committee of the Whole, as I am moving a family member back home from respite care tomorrow, but should you wish to contact me, I am available at

Thank you,

Anna Bortolus
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