



July 12, 2024

City Council
300 Dufferin Ave.,
London, Ontario

RE: Contribution to The Chelsea Green Home Society, Vision SoHo Project

Dear Councillors,

I am writing in response to the Report to Community and Protective Services Committee from Scott Mathers, Deputy Manager, Planning and Economic Development. I am the President of The Chelsea Green Home Society, which is one of the non-profit housing providers building on the site of the old Victoria Hospital.

I was pleased to learn that staff had recommended that council continue to commit the full contribution value of \$1.7 million. What I was surprised to read was that this recommendation came with further restrictions and stipulations for the City's rebate for impacted soils, which have been paid in full by Chelsea Green Home Society, and totals nearly \$567,000 to date. What is being recommended is that the rebated costs for the impacted soils are to be withheld until 1. the property tax waiver is received, and 2. once the property re-instates all 41 affordable units.

Chelsea Green's request for a property tax exemption is being held up pending appeal of a decision on a similar case. The appeal is expected to be heard later this Fall or early next year. As the Chelsea Green Home Society generally operates similarly to the other Soho non-profit partners who have previously received the exemption, it is expected to be ultimately granted. The City withholding repayment for the impacted soils seems punitive and unnecessary and will make cash flow very tight. It could impact our ability to keep building and could put the non-profit, and the entire SoHo project into financial challenges and delays. Given the unpredictability of actually receiving the property tax waiver, the undetermined timeline for a decision and the uncertainty of the economic viability of the project in consideration of the 41 restored affordable units, we simply cannot agree to the recommendation by staff to withhold the repayment with these stipulations.

What we will consider once a decision is made on the property tax exemption, is a restoration of as many affordable units as we can economically accommodate, and possibly up to the 41 units total as initially planned. Our board is very committed to providing affordable housing in the city of London and I ask for your assistance in providing us with timely funding so that we can continue doing the best we can to house as many people as we can, for as little cost as possible.

Sincerely,

THE CHELSEA GREEN HOME SOCIETY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Riggin".

Susan Riggin - President