

Sent via email to: cpssc@london.ca

February 1, 2022

Councillor Maureen Cassidy
Chair, Community and Protective Services Committee
314 – 300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6A 4L9

Re: **2.3 – End of Mortgage (EOM) and End of Operating Agreement (EOA)
Impacts and Analysis, and
2.4 – Odell Jalna Social Housing Provider Proposal**

Dear Councillor Cassidy and other Committee members,

Thank you and City staff in the Municipal Housing Division for the efforts you have made to solve the multi-faceted nature of London's affordable housing crisis. I am pleased to finally see action being taken to address the financial challenges faced by community housing providers subject to the *Housing Services Act* and its dysfunctional funding formula. This report has been a long time coming.

Birch Housing (formerly Inter Faith Homes) is a medium-sized community housing provider with 576 units operating in five Ontario cities, including London. We own and operate one community housing complex in London comprised of 64 units in four townhouse blocks in Ward 10. With larger-sized units, our complex is home to many families needing affordable housing.

I have written this letter today after having read both above-noted Committee reports. I was pleased to see the direction that staff are recommending in the report and would like to see you recommend the report for adoption by Council. The direction outlined is critical to our future success.

I wanted to bring to your attention one of the most important paragraphs in one of the Committee reports. This is the crux of the situation that must be addressed. City staff write on page 1 of Agenda Item 2.4, (with my emphasis):

As housing providers reach their End of Mortgage (EOM), it is becoming apparent that the current Housing Services Act funding formula developed many years ago is not adequate to sustain the viability of the housing stock in order to provide affordable housing in today's environment. London's community housing portfolio is aging. With the rising cost of operations, the extremely low prescribed market rents, and the significant capital repair needs, *the financial funding model is not adequate. Without some form of additional subsidy, it is not financially feasible for all projects to continue to provide safe and appropriate affordable community housing.*

The recommendations in the report before you must be adopted. The solutions to our funding issues are needed by our organization as well as others and the sooner they are developed by staff the better. The innovation being recommended by staff for London's largest housing provider, Odell Jalna, will set the stage for the continuation and growth of the community housing sector.

We are hopeful that the new provincial regulatory framework being collaboratively worked on by service managers, housing providers, our sector association, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, and the province will provide us and other organizations in the City's housing system with the financial support needed to continue our mission of providing quality affordable housing.

In a City with such great affordable housing needs, certainty for us is as important as it is for you. Your commitment to our financial stability will provide needed comfort to the board of Birch Housing (Inter Faith Homes), and all other non-profit and co-op housing communities in London.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Carlson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Margie Carlson
Executive Director
Birch Housing (Inter Faith Homes (London) Corporation)
info@birchhousing.ca