

## Landlord Licensing: The Challenge Continues!

As part of the 2013 city budget, city staff recommended an 800-per-cent increase to landlords for the Residential Rental Licensing Bylaw fees. City staff recommended that the landlord licensing fees be increased from the current \$25 per building per year to \$230 per year for new applications and \$80 for renewals. As many of you already know, the licensing fee applies to rental properties with one to four units. This means tenants of single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes must pay the increase.

LPMA retained the legal services of Joe Hoffer of Cohen Highley to speak to council during a public participation meeting on the budget. Joe obtained information from the city through a Freedom of Information request and showed members of council that staff failed to provide council with the following information:

- The licensing program has been in operation for three years and has operated at a loss of \$1.6 million, all of which has been paid for by taxpayers.
- 3,000 license applications were received, only 15 were refused, and none were for "substandard housing." This means it cost taxpayers \$84,000 for each violation and 15 tenant households were evicted.
- All 15 violations could have been dealt with by the city under the fire code (two violations) or the zoning bylaw (13 violations), not the licensing bylaw.
- Staff want increased fees to hire two more staff members, which will cause ongoing annual operating losses of \$400K because the increase in fees will barely cover the cost of two new staff members.
- The license is not like those issued to taxis, retail stores and other businesses where license fees are passed on to hundreds of customers; these fees are passed on directly to tenants living in buildings with one to four units, period!
- Staff proposals are "empire building" with no benefit to tenants or taxpayers and taxpayers will continue to fund the annual \$420K loss.

After Joe's presentation to council, we encouraged all of you to speak to your city councillor. For those of you who did, thank you!

On Feb. 28, city council met to pass the budget. Included in the budget was the proposed licensing fee increase. The issue was debated and a link to the video from council's meeting can be found on LPMA's website. The licensing fee increase was supported by council on an eight to six vote. The eight councillors who supported increasing the landlord licensing fee are: Joe Fontana, Joe Swan, Joni Baechler, Nancy Branscombe, Paul Hubert, Harold Usher, Judy Bryant, and Sandy White.

However, it does not end here. The motion to increase the fee indicated that the increase is subject first to a public participation meeting and then it is to be sent back to council for a final decision.

Therefore, if ever there was a time for each and every landlord in this city to talk to their city councillor it is now! The only way we can try and get this program kicked out of city hall is by contacting city councillors and by appearing at the future public meeting. It was a close vote to pass this increase at the Feb. 28 budget meeting. LPMA encourages each of you to speak to your city councillor and especially if you live in one of the wards of the eight councillors who supported the increase. Make sure your councillor understands that the licensing bylaw adds no value to the city, imposes a hardship on tenants, and costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual losses: Just quote the bullet points above. Councillors' contact information can be found on the City of London website, [www.london.ca](http://www.london.ca). If you have any questions, feel free to contact the LPMA office.



An 800-per-cent increase is recommended.

## Kristin Ley has joined our Partnership



Kristin is a Lawyer in our Administrative Law Group. Her practice focuses on residential and commercial tenancies, human rights, condominium law and appellate advocacy. She works exclusively for housing providers and landlords with respect to all lease issues.

Kristin appears before a number of boards and tribunals, including the Human Rights Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board. As well, she has represented clients before all levels of Ontario courts.

Kristin regularly speaks at property management conferences and prepares and conducts human rights training courses to landlords and property managers. She has addressed the following organizations: Canadian Condominium Institute, the London Property Management Association (LPMA), the Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO), the Institute of Housing Management, the Greater Toronto Apartment Association (GTAA), the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Paralegal Society of Ontario.

Kristin's admission to Partnership reflects both the continued growth of Cohen Highley and Kristin's integrity, work ethic and dedication to her clients.



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