

NEW OCP CREATES ELITIST HIGH COST COMMUNITY

By Kerry Morris - March 7, 2015

The allegation that Council was presiding over a 'Developer-Driven OCP' was challenged by councillor Craig Keating during his summation speech, prior to council voting on and approving the OCP, which passed third reading by a 4/3 split decision, supported by only the Team Mussatto 'Slate'.

Keating, took issue with the comments and insinuations made by councillors Pam Bookham and Rod Clark, claiming their statements which allege the process has been 'Developer-Driven' were "not helpful language". In what has become usual Keating college instructor form, he lectured all in attendance that:

"Individuals and councillors are entitled to their opinions, not their facts"

This a message which Keating himself needs to think on. But he did raise an interesting point, which is; What are the facts? And does Mayor Darrell Mussatto and his 'Slate', including Keating, twist those facts at every opportunity to push an agenda not of the communities making or in the best interest of residents?

Affordable Housing: The facts are that over 50% of our community is comprised of renters. Many of these renters fall into the category of seniors, living either on a pension or a combination of pension and part time job. Like the vast majority of Canadians, neither their pensions nor their employment incomes have kept pace with inflation. So they scrape by every month ever cautious that their money must stretch further and further.

As council has approved developments like 161 East Keith, and numerous others around the City, it has done so at the expense of existing affordable housing, at rent levels which for many are a stretch, but levels which were within reach. As council has approved the destruction of these affordable rental units, without a realistic plan to deal with the many individuals who are displaced by each project, they create a housing crises for many. A crises which is beginning to drive many of our elderly into couch surfing and homelessness.

You will recall when Michael Katz appeared before council, he told the chamber that 161 East Keith would provide rental accommodation in the price range of \$2.25 to \$2.50 per sq/ft, for units the majority of which ranged in size from 500 to 650 sq/ft. But he made it very clear that rents would reflect the market value of the day. The 'Fact' is

that older buildings in the Victoria Park area are currently renting out at levels at or above the levels which Mr. Fredrick Gooding's new rental building asserted as market, even today. Reference was also made to the fact that the new Gooding Manor, would have rents which reflected its higher standard of construction and shiny new presents versus the older rental structures in the immediate area.

If older 1 bedroom apartments now have a starting rent of \$1,850/month, what will Gooding Manor go for? And where will all those poor soles who have been displaced by Gooding Manors arrival find an affordable rental alternative. Thus it is no surprise these renters feel that they are being driven from their community by a pompous lecturer who displays little regard for those over whom he trods, while in hot pursuit of yet another

campaign donation, for yet another electoral challenge. That would appear to be the opinion of Ms. Sue Lakes-Cook, a senior who indeed lives on a combination of pension and part-time employment, and who during Tuesday nights Public Hearing asked the Mayor to provide her with a list of rental accommodations at or within her financial capacity, which she identified as being in a range of \$700 to \$1,000 per month.

Mussatto had no response for Ms. Lakes-Cook, just that vacant grin, which is one of the few constants we're able to rely on, year to year, when the tough questions get asked.

