

I am proud to be born, raised, and now a homeowner in Kitchener. At some times, I'm more proud than at others. One of those times was last Monday evening, when Mayor Vrbanovic bravely and rightly stood up for his constituents' human rights by putting forward a motion in support of developing a renoviction bylaw, supported by Councillors Chapman, Denault, Johnston, Michaud, and Owodunni. Thank you, Councillors, for supporting this crucially important homelessness- and poverty- prevention measure. This choice reflects the Kitchener I want to call home for my family, the Kitchener where I want to run my consulting business, the Kitchener I want to promote to friends looking to leave other cities as they are priced out or evicted.

The rate of affordable housing loss in Kitchener is 39:1 versus 15:1 province-wide. This statistic tells us that something needs to change. Is a renoviction bylaw going to be the full change we need? No – a multi-dimensional, intersectional crisis requires a multi-dimensional, intersectional response. This is merely one of those dimensions, an easy win. This is a small piece of legislation that has the potential to make a big difference. Can we accurately predict the difference it will make based on a large pool of evidence? We cannot, because this is new. This is new, innovative, creative, hopeful, and brave. Motions that hold true to those qualifiers don't tend to have a ton of evidence to look to – but that doesn't mean we should wait on them. As the rate of homelessness only increases in Waterloo Region (as per PiT Counts), we need action, urgently. While we wait, people become homeless. While we wait, people get sick from the dangerous physical impact of homelessness and chronic eviction threat. While we wait, people die.

Mayor Vrbanovic and Councillors Chapman, Denault, Johnston, Michaud, and Owodunni, please don't be distracted by external voices tonight. Please don't worry about creating false hope - your constituents are smart and resourceful enough to understand that a renoviction bylaw will not amount to an end to evictions, including their own. Please don't get distracted by irrelevant arguments about N12s, N4s, and other eviction measures that have nothing to do with bad faith N13s. Please don't get distracted by claims that we have processes in place to deal with bad landlords: a renoviction bylaw offers **prevention**. It is a chance to act instead of waiting for intervention when we very well know the process we have for intervention (the LTB) is a backlogged, slow, ineffective mess. This bylaw would actually take some of the weight off that process so that it can run more effectively. This bylaw is a means for proactive landlord accountability in a situation of extreme power imbalance, and a deterrent against predatory landlords within our own city as those flocking in from outside cities where renoviction bylaws already exist.

Please don't fall into the trap of thinking that evictions only cause individual harm. Evictions have broad social harms that surpass any individual tenant or landlord: the costs of homelessness due to housing precarity far outweigh the costs associated with this bylaw. This bylaw would improve housing stability in general by ensuring proper notice, compensation, and right of return for tenants.

This is the City of Kitchener's chance to be a leader in a crisis we cannot expect the Province to fix. Please don't wait; please support a renoviction bylaw tonight. Thank you.

Meagan Snyder