

# Reader responds to letter proposing evicting higher income co-op 'tenants'

Dear editor:

I refer to the letter written by Don Dagenais, Give Premier Harris a chance, wherein he suggests "evicting the higher income tenants at Cobblehill."

First of all, Mr. Dagenais, there are no tenants at Cobblehill, the only people residing there are members. Anyone having any knowledge of co-op housing and how it works, knows that to live in a co-op you must first become a member. There is an application, reference and credit check, an interview process and a final motion for approval. Not everyone makes it through.

Obviously, Mr. Dagenais has little if any knowledge of the

particles and principles that make up a co-op. He refers to "market value." I wonder how he would know what members pay 'market value' and what members don't. I wonder how he could possibly know the incomes of these 'market paying' members. As past treasurer, I can assure you this is highly confidential information.

As Mr. Dagenais is so taken with the idea of evicting members who pay market value, there are a few things he should know. As a co-op, we prepare a budget once a year. This budget includes the mortgage, snow clearing, lawn care, maintenance costs, materials for repairs, administration expense, etc. Once approved by

the general members, housing charges are set by this budget. The budget is prepared with market figures per unit only. This is what the co-op gets and needs to meet their expenses. Units that cannot pay the market value receive assistance from another source, namely the government. Where does the government get their money? From you and me, the taxpayer. How then does evicting market value members make it a more cost effective measure for the taxpayer?

Also all co-ops have a target plan in agreement with the Ministry of Ontario, and all co-ops, must have a percentage of units paying market value, a percentage

paying shallow core (RGI) and a percentage paying deep core (welfare recipients). If all units were to be deep core, then the Ministry of Housing would have to kick in a considerable amount of subsidy.

A co-op is made up of a group of people, living together in a co-operative environment. It's not about money, it's about a way of life. It is not the Canadian dream where everyone can own their own home but it's a pretty good alternative. Rather than answer to a money grabbing, caring for profit only landlord, members control their environment. Affordable housing happens only because members give their time

and efforts to keep administration and maintenance costs to a minimum.

If Mr. Dagenais or interested others, still don't understand what makes a co-op work or why middle income earners are entitled to the same benefits as people not fortunate enough to have a place of employment in today's tough economic times, and because we are a co-operative people, we invite you to an information meeting. Call the office at Cobblehill for details.

Betty Cole  
Board of Directors, founding board, 1989-1992  
Board of directors, 1992-1994  
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A Registered Nurse, Melody holds a BScN and an MBA from the University of Windsor and brings to the position senior level administrative experience in community health care as a Director of Public Health Nursing and most recently as the Executive Director for VON, Simcoe County Branch.

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