

OFFICE OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

MEETING INFORMATION NOTE

DATE: November 10, 2014

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister

MEETING DETAILS: Meeting with Landlord BC on November 18, 2014 at 3:00pm to discuss Certified Rental Building Program, Landlord Registry and Sustainable Rental Housing Industry

- Attendees:
 - David Hutniak, LandlordBC CEO
 - Jason Fawcett, LandlordBC Board Director
 - Karin MacMillan, Western Policy Consultants Inc.
 - Jeff Vasey, ADM, Office of Housing and Construction Standards

BACKGROUND:

LandlordBC is proposing to operate and manage a Certified Rental Building Program and a Landlord Registry and would like support from the province toward the establishment of these initiatives.

Start-up funding of \$250,000 to establish the Landlord Registry is being requested.

LandlordBC is also interested in following up on previous discussions about rent controls.

ISSUES:

Certified Rental Building Program

- LandlordBC plans to establish a multi-residential apartment building certification program modeled on an Ontario program that has been operating for over 5 years.
- Prospective rental housing providers will be required to meet a defined set of more than 36 industry quality assurance standards of practice for tenants, in order to receive certification and become listed on the LandlordBC Registry.
- The program will include mandatory Standards of Practice, Training and Education, Customer Support and an External Building and Operations Audit to ensure rental housing buildings are fully compliant with all standards of safety and practice. Certification will be conducted by an independent, third-party auditor.
- The goal is to provide rental housing consumers with a quality assurance alternative when selecting their apartment home.
- LandlordBC had planned to launch the program in September 2014.

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Landlord Registry

- LandlordBC would like to work with the province to establish a mandatory registry of all landlords in BC, which would be operated and managed by LandlordBC.
- Start-up funding of \$250,000 is being requested. Once established, the program is proposed to be self-sustaining, funded by a landlord registration fee.
- Landlords would be required to provide detailed property descriptions including building type, address, number of units, types of suites and average monthly rent, type of building construction, and occupancy rate at time of registration.
- The goal is enhanced professionalism and accountability of landlords.
- The program would require all landlords to use a standardized set of industry forms including tenant application, tenancy agreement, and rental condition inspection, developed by LandlordBC to meet RTB requirements.
- It would provide tenants with a “Customer Satisfaction” program for rating landlords which landlords can then address and rectify complaints. The mitigate landlord/tenant disputes and reduce the costs associated with disputes.
- LandlordBC states that a central Landlord Registry would provide the benefits of:
 - The first comprehensive landlord/rental housing database in BC.
 - Accurate information on the number of landlords and their rental properties.
 - An education platform to landlords and tenants, about each party’s responsibilities in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act*, with the goal of enhancing the standard of rental housing in BC and mitigating the number of landlord/tenant disputes.
 - An efficient means of distribution to disseminate information and education to landlords and tenants regarding updates on the duties and responsibilities of landlords and tenants in British Columbia.
 - Providing tenants, neighbours and government with easy access to information about landlords and their properties, and providing landlords with an opportunity to demonstrate to tenants that they offer safe, secure rental housing.

Sustainable Rental Housing Industry

- LandlordBC views rent control as having a negative impact on the overall health of the rental housing market and an impediment to a viable rental housing industry.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- I understand that the Certified Rental Building program in Ontario has been quite successful and that prospective tenants can search for certified rental buildings on the program’s website.
- Although a Landlord Registry has great potential, at this time we are not interested in requiring mandatory registration of all landlords in the province. It is, however, something that LandlordBC could consider making mandatory for members.

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- I realize that as a non-profit society, LandlordBC has limited means to raise capital; however, there is no mechanism for the province to fund this initiative at this time.
- The Residential Tenancy Branch has recently updated the website which provides easier access to information on rights and responsibilities under the Act, as well as standardized forms.
- We have had previous discussions about rent control and I appreciate your views.

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November 10, 2014

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Nov. 17/14
