

## Anger, fear draws hundreds of residents to housing forum

### ‘People are really upset about what’s happening,’ MLA Eby says

Anger and frustration were common explanations people gave for their attendance at an emergency housing forum held Wednesday in Vancouver.



*GERRY KAHRMANN/PNG* City residents vent their feelings on signs at MLA David Eby’s emergency housing town hall meeting held Wednesday at the Hellenic Community Hall in Kerrisdale. More than 600 attended the forum.

More than 600 citizens, housing activists and politicians from all levels of government packed the Hellenic Community Centre in Kerrisdale for an event organized by MLA David Eby to discuss the issues around the Lower Mainland’s out-of-control real estate market.

Before the event, Eby said there’s been “overwhelming” demand to discuss issues affecting housing affordability such as international capital flowing into the Metro Vancouver market, “wild” speculative activity, shadow flipping, wholesale real estate, realtor conduct and a lack of rental housing.

“People are really upset about what’s happening,” Eby said.

“Their wages have no connection to the amount of money that is being charged for rent and for housing to buy. The frustration that people have is they think their kids aren’t going to be able to afford to live here, they see the communities they love really no longer belonging to the community.

“And the idea of their community — where people could live there and work in the Lower Mainland — is disappearing.”

Eby called for provincial government action and said he expected the event to gain their attention.

“There’s all kinds of solutions available to them to rein in some of the speculation that’s happening, to rein in some of the international capital that’s coming into our market,” Eby said.

“They need to act and this meeting is a symbol of people’s frustration and their demand that the provincial government act.”

Ommi Milne, in her 60s, a Point Grey resident, said she’s been made “so angry” by Vancouver’s housing situation.

“It is just horrifying to hear about the number of people who are looking for affordable housing and what they get is slum lords and what they get is disaster, and what they get is no housing,” Ommi said.

Ommi said she didn’t want to live in a “tourist” city. She was at the event in support of building communities with residents contributing to the “life” of the city, she said.

Brett Carels, 40, an East Vancouver resident, said he’s “frustrated” with the direction housing is going in Vancouver.

“The Canadian dream, the future of this city, is disappearing,” Carels said.

“It’s completely unaffordable, even rents are through the roof and there’s absolutely no action being taken by any levels of the government. I’ve just simply ... had enough.”

The price for a typical detached home in Greater Vancouver (excluding Langley, North Delta and Surrey) reached \$1.3 million in February, up 27 per cent from a year before, according to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver.