

DNV stratas can't stop future rentals

BY BRENT RICHTER, NORTH SHORE NEWS APRIL 21, 2013

STRATA councils in newer buildings in the District of North Vancouver won't have the same power to tell their members who can and can't rent out their units following a change of bylaws at district hall.

Council voted unanimously Monday night to adopt a bylaw that states no strata council may enact bylaws that restrict the amount of units that can be rented in a development.

The goal of the change is to maintain a healthy stock of rental housing options in the district, since few purpose-built rental buildings have been constructed since the 1970s, and existing ones are threatened by redevelopment with new condos.

"I think this policy addition . . . is going to go a long way to ensuring a viable rental stock in the future," said Coun. Roger Bassam. "I'm looking forward to the results of this in 20 years when my kids are looking for an apartment."

While the vote in favour of the change was 7-0, there was some reticence among council members to wade into putting new regulations on what is otherwise the jurisdiction of stratas.

"I really believe that this is a bit of an intrusion into the free market of real estate properties. I certainly understand and sympathize with the objectives that are in place," Coun. Alan Nixon said before throwing his support behind the bylaw.

Coun. Mike Little said he too was leery about regulating strata decisions, but he said, renters face bias in the housing market.

"At the end of the day, I think that the discrimination against rental tenants is unfair," he said.

Beyond that, Little said he'd like to see the district's neighbours in the City of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver adopt similar policies to address the threatened rental housing across the North Shore.

The new rules would apply to every future multi-family project in the district, including the several large ones already under consideration. The policy has been reviewed by the district's lawyers, a district staff report notes.

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