North Cowichan asks for rent regulation between tenancies

ROBERT BARRON
COWICHAN VALLEY CITIZEN

North Cowichan is asking the province to regulate rent increases by landlords when one tenant moves out and another moves in.

The issue was discussed last month after the municipality received a letter from a tenant who saw rents in their apartment building increase dramatically.

The renter pointed out that Victoria's city council has asked the province to regulate rental increases between tenancies.

"If your council wants to help prevent homelessness, asking the province to cap rental increases between tenancies would be a great help," they said.

A two-per cent rent increase cap for 2023 in B.C., announced by Premier John Horgan last month, does not apply to rent increases between tenancies.

Coun. Kate Marsh said the province used to regulate rent increases between tenancies and stopping the initiative has contributed to the current housing crisis.

"When rents can go up 25 per cent to 50 per cent, I think this is part of the housing problem," she said.

Coun. Tek Manhas said he can't support rent controls. He said that for the past three or four years, landlords have been having a difficult time keeping to 1.25-per cent rent increases while property taxes are going up as much as 10 per cent in some jurisdictions.

Mayor Al Siebring said the issue is not regulated by municipalities, but by the Residential Tenancies Act.

A statement from the ministry responsible for housing noted that a rental housing task force in 2018 recommended maintaining rent "tied to the renter and not the unit, while lowering the annual allowable rent increase."

robert.barron@cowichanvalleycitizen.com

Town reflects on Orange Shirt Day's meaning

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"Our community wants to thank our Stz'uminus neighbours for their patience and understanding and willingness to look with us into the future," Stone said. "I also want to remind everyone that Sept. 30 is not a holiday. It's a day to reflect on what has been done and how it can be put away but never forgotten."

After the introduction, Stz'uminus chief and council presented the town with an 'Every Child Matters' flag.

The Young Wolves dancers and singers followed the opening remarks. The youth group, consisting of elementary- and secondary-school-aged children and teens, is learning the songs and dances of their nation's culture.

The Tzinquaw Dancers, from Cowichan Tribes, also performed dances and songs for the audience.

The last performance was songs and remarks from Patrick Aleck who is from Stz'uminus First Nation. During his songs he was assisted by students from Ladysmith Intermediate School who played drums. Aleck spoke about the school survivors and the children who didn't survive. He talked about how some of the survivors still have problems with their past suffering.

"Many have come out but many more are still stuck in the cloud of mistreatment," he said.

Harris closed the event by thanking the performers, speakers, dignitaries and especially the survivors who came out and listened and shared.

"Can we educate ourselves about the truth in our history? Can we all be a part of the solution? Can we be proactive?" she asked.

editor@ladysmithchronicle.com

Ladysmith Mayor Aaron Stone, left, looks on as Stz'uminus Chief Roxanne Harris and councillors Herb Seymour and Tim Harris present an Every Child Matters flag to the Town of Ladysmith during the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation ceremony at Transfer Beach last Friday. (Duck Paterson photo)

Stz'uminus Young Wolves dancers and singers perform cultural dances. (Duck Paterson photo)