

Dear Mayor Brown, Members of Council and City Clerk

Re: January 31, 2024 – Committee of Council Meeting – Residential Rental Licensing Pilot Project!

I take this opportunity to express my sincere disappointment in the Committee of Council meeting held on January 31, 2024 at which the Residential Rental Licensing Pilot Program was discussed.

I have had the privilege of attending many Council, Committee of Adjustment and Planning and Development meetings over several decades. I have attended public meetings and town halls and engagement opportunities such as traffic safety and The Resident Association development workshop. I have communicated widely with the city about diverse issues and I have never hesitated in stating my opinion, over the years. My mandate has, and will remain, to lend my voice to make my community a better place to live, for all. I shoot from the hip but lead with my heart – both a blessing and a curse. But more importantly, I hold close to my heart a deep respect for polite decorum, respect and adherence to the principles that guide our Canadian municipal government. The Council Chamber is not a place for demonstrations or unruly behaviour!

I regret that I was unable to complete my presentation – perhaps I should have asked some of my neighbours and friends to register, not show up and demand that I be allowed to speak on their behalf; thereby giving me enough time to complete my presentation!

I had a lot to say about the state of the community that I, for the time-being call home. When I stood at the podium on Wednesday, I could not focus on my message; even the break for lunch could not temper my disgust over the earlier proceedings or the raucous exit of the Chambers by the morning speakers. In all my years of civic engagement, including my long career in municipal service, I have never experienced the lack of decorum, respect and adherence to the rules of order demonstrated in our sacred Council Chambers at the morning session. I was appalled! What made matters worse was the fact that none of the disrupters from the morning session returned to hear what the community representatives had to say. That says a great deal, doesn't it!

I would like my voice heard in full support of this much-needed licensing program at the follow-up session proposed; however, I am hesitant to return if changes are not made to ensure order and mutual respect for everyone.

I take the liberty now of sharing some thoughts on process that I, and many others, would like to see implemented at any future public meetings on this matter.

At the beginning of the meeting when the Chair states the Rules of Conduct, I respectfully request that it be made clear that delegates must stay seated and remain until the conclusion of the entire meeting and listen to ALL the presentations. Out of respect for everyone present all participants must turn off cell phones, not talk beyond a whisper in the gallery, clap, shout out or ask questions that disrupt the proceedings.

I feel it is the obligation of Mayor Brown, as head of Council to demonstrate appropriate leadership to stand up and support the Chair and the City Clerk when they have been given a first warning about disruption and demand that any re-offending person be ejected from the Chamber immediately and escorted out by Security staff.

The lack of civility shown by the morning deputations and the rowdy behaviour sadly demonstrated by those involved should not be tolerated at any future meeting on this subject.

Perhaps a Civility Policy should be enacted in Brampton whereby the public conduct while participating in the democratic process be respected so that public engagement is more effective. Where all members of the public address Mayor, Members of Council, staff and the gallery with appropriate civility. Where everyone has full, fair and equal opportunity to be heard by ALL! This would help to promote mutual respect and orderly conduct in a safe environment that is free from harassment and disruption.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Regards,

Barbara Johnstone

cc: Brampton Guardian

Rick Drennen

Elvira O'Malley