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Solid Waste Department
City of Ottawa

Dear Sir or Madam:

Re: Solid waste collection frequency

This is to convey the concerns of the Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization (EOLO) about the possibility of the frequency of garbage collection being reduced to every two weeks.

EOLO consists of the owners and managers of more than 36,000 rental units in Ottawa, as well as key suppliers to the rental housing industry. Our members range from the largest residential landlords in Eastern Ontario through low-rise owners to the owners of one or two rental units. All private Ottawa landlords with more than 2,000 rental units belong to EOLO. EOLO has been the voice of private rental housing providers in Ottawa since 1990.

We understand that the goal of reducing the frequency of solid waste collection would be to encourage residents to recycle more with a view to lengthening the date at which an expansion of a garbage dump or a new dump is necessary.

EOLO's concerns

Depending on what it consists of, how it is stored, and the temperature, the storage of garbage can produce:

- Smell
- Mess
- Bugs
- Rats or mice
- Other animals

In understanding the impact of residents storing garbage for two weeks, one needs to consider:

- What the garbage consists of
- Where the garbage can be stored
- In what conditions it can be stored (especially temperature).

The location and conditions for storage vary considerably because rental buildings vary considerably. They include single family homes, doubles and duplexes, row houses, converted buildings, and walk-up apartment buildings of various sizes.

The negative result of garbage storage applies to many homes but our concerns are heightened regarding several specific areas.

1. Lack of garbage storage space by tenants

This concern applies especially to row houses and converted buildings. Such buildings are a significant part of the rental stock in Ottawa. Such buildings usually have small yards, or no individual yards, no garages and little or no common area.

As a result in row houses and converted buildings one can expect a real problem about where to put the garbage. The obvious location is outside the buildings in a yard area but that can be an eyesore and will interfere with the use of the yards for adults and children. Less outside time for children will be one negative impact.

Other problems will be the standard problems of smell, mess, rats, bugs and other animals. However, those problems will affect residents of those units more than most homeowners because of the close quarters in which they live.

2. Demand for garbage storage by the landlord

This concern applies especially to converted buildings and walk-up apartment buildings. Because they lack space in their exclusive use areas, tenants will demand that landlords provide a sanitary central garbage storage area. However, there is usually no space available for such storage, and the buildings are not air conditioned.

For landlords, any cost savings achieved by moving to bi-weekly collection, will be swamped by the costs we incur to manage the garbage. Since our market is very competitive, the cost increases will ultimately be paid by tenants.

3. Impact on Tenants

Tenants will be stuck with unpleasant choices about where to keep the garbage, and what to do with it. Tenants will face the effects of their own garbage and the garbage of other tenants.

For tenants, a reduction in collection frequency will result in a personal inconvenience, less hygienic space, more work and trouble, and higher costs once the increased costs of landlords are passed through to them.

4. Impact on Neighbours

Neighbours of rental properties will also be adversely affected. Within the Greenbelt many buildings are built close together. Given the problems already

outlined, one can anticipate a significant increase in effects across property boundaries.

Those effects will be the most severe in communities with a mix of students and long term residents, such as Sandy Hill. Already there are challenges during the prime seasons for moves. The challenges will be doubled or tripled if the garbage collection frequency is cut back to every other week.

5. Unintended Consequences

While the intention is to improve recycling the actual effect may be the opposite . We foresee a risk that garbage will contaminate the recycling material because residents will be desperate to get rid of their garbage. We also foresee residents will be taking garbage to street bins or to public areas where they can dump it without being caught.

Conclusion

For landlords, a reduction in collection frequency will result in a personal inconvenience, more work and trouble, and higher costs far outweighing any savings which may be realized.

For tenants, a reduction in collection frequency will result in a personal inconvenience, less hygienic space, more work and trouble, and higher costs once the increased costs of landlords are passed through to them.

For the neighbors of rental properties the proposed change will likely result in odour, mess, and other spill over effects, despite the best efforts which landlords make to limit those problems.

In conclusion, for everyone's sake, we urge the City to continue to collect garbage at least once per week year round.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Dickie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Dickie
Chair, Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization