CITY OF Thunder Bay
Superior by Nature

Mayor's Taskforce on Building More Homes Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
Additional Information

Wednesday, October 16, 2024, 12:30 p.m.
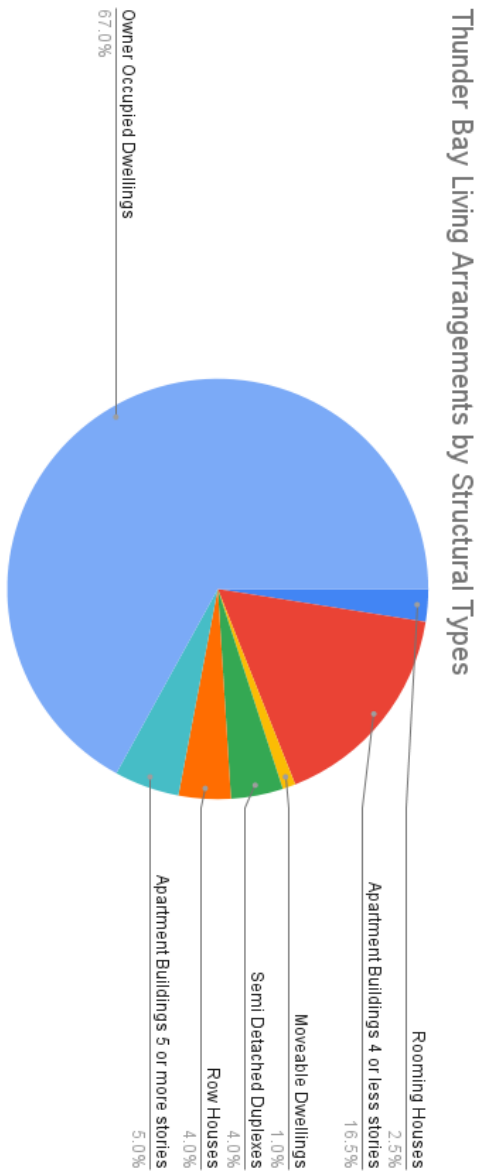McNaughton Room - 3rd Floor, City Hall

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Pages

7. **Deputations**

BACKGROUND

For the last number of years, the neighborhoods within our great City of Thunder Bay have seen drastic changes by way of a steadily increasing number of "Homeless People" which in turn resulted in people engaging into what is termed "couch-surfing" and or living in tents which in turn had effects of "tent-cities" springing up within various parts of our city.

In the past, conditions such as frustrated landlords, poorly kept buildings, and destructive tenants, have resulted in disabling accidents, violent confrontations, deliberate destruction and fatalities within residential living environments. Landlords feel there is an imbalance in the act, favouring tenants. Tenants, in contrast feel that landlords are favoured. These conflicting attitudes can often lead to destructive and violent behaviour. This is more apparent in living environments which consists of rooming and lodgings houses. In my consideration, ergonomic principles can be applied to landlord and tenant environments, which can help reduce and possibly eliminate potential for conflict. I set out to eliminate this senseless destructive behaviour.

FIGURE #1

Thunder Bay Living Arrangements by Structural Types

Owner Occupied Dwellings 67.0%

Apartment Buildings 5 or more stories 5.0%

Row Houses 4.0%

Semi Detached Duplexes 4.0%

Moveable Dwellings 1.0%

Apartment Buildings 4 or less stories 16.5%

Rooming Houses 2.5%

* To be updated

PROBLEM

The housing crisis has left many people without adequate shelter, forcing some to live in tents or on the streets. Homelessness has become a visible and growing issue, with countless individuals and families unable to secure affordable housing. They face harsh conditions, lacking basic necessities like sanitation and safety, while the availability of affordable housing options continues to shrink. This lack of shelter creates a cycle of instability and limits opportunities for these individuals to improve their lives and the public safety.

On the other side, landlords are hesitant to rent out properties due to concerns over potential damage caused by tenants. For many property owners, the cost of repairing damages often outweighs the income generated from rent. This risk, combined with expensive maintenance and insurance, discourages landlords from offering their homes to renters, particularly those with limited financial means. As a result, many properties remain vacant, further contributing to the housing shortage and leaving even fewer options for those in need.

VILLA HOUSE

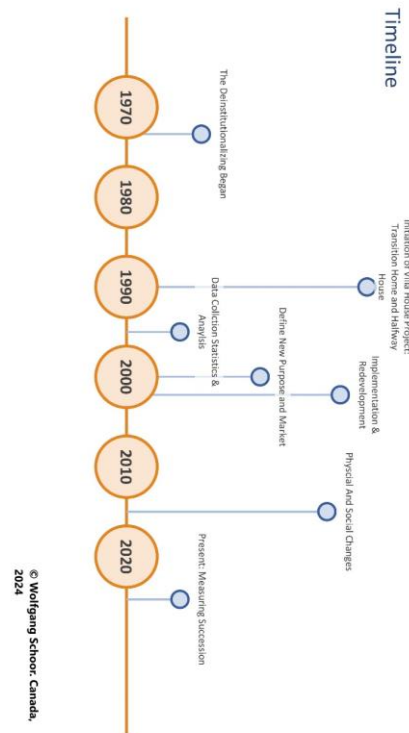## Philosophy and Purpose to Bring About Change

The "Villa House" operates as a sort of "safe-home away from home". The idea is to create a warm accepting, supportive, and independent living environment. Hose rules of good conduct are established and reinforced. In general, these rules are designed from within to promote respect for self, others, and property; the idea and sense of responsible citizenship, civility and coexistence.

Villa House Research Project

In early 1990s while attending the University of Waterloo, I initiated a self-funded research project through which certain ergonomic principles were introduced to villa house living environment. I set out to change the destructive tenant cycle through the gradual introduction of legal ergonomic principals and certain motivational and reinforcement notions. Suffice to say, the results have been very encouraging. So much so, that the outcome of my research has received wide recognition within the community and elsewhere.

VILLA HOUSE PROGRESSION

Timeline

- 1970 — The Deinstitutionalizing Began
- 1980
- 1990 — Initiation of Villa House Project: Transition Home and Halfway House
- 2000 — Data Collection Statistics & Analysis; Define New Purpose and Market; Implementation & Redevelopment
- 2010 — Physical And Social Changes
- 2020 — Present: Measuring Succession

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SOLUTION

Solution #1: Tiny Home Clusters

Tiny homes can offer an affordable and practical solution for people with modest means, creating living spaces that are manageable and fit for human habitation. These small communities encourage close interactions among neighbors, fostering supportive relationships. Whether it's helping with a small task or sharing a conversation, these everyday encounters build a sense of belonging, strengthening the fabric of healthy, livable communities.

Solution #2: Existing Non-Rented Units

New housing will take a long time to develop, however for the interim, existing non renting landlords need to be encouraged but also assured that tenants have the skills to be responsible. Physical and social changes are required for this to happen. Landlords and tenants need to have a clear understanding of rights and obligations, as it will be easier for them to comply. Noncompliance needs to have legal and immediate consequences.