



Housing society complaints

1 message

Scott Gilbert <scottgilbertvan@gmail.com>Sun., Feb. 16, 2025 at 11:31 p.m.

To: feedback@bchousing.org, victoria mansfield <vmansfield18@gmail.com>, Scott Gilbert <scottgilbertvan@gmail.com>

Hello,

I have two complaints to make about housing societies that I have worked for. I am submitting them here and would like a prompt written reply. In the absence of any response I will complain to the City and ask them to take action, but I feel BC Housing can and should remedy these issues internally without media or city involvement.

1) FJL Housing at units 303-320 of 138 E Hastings St has been required to provide minimum 50 percent of their 18 units at the ministry rate of \$375 (which has since increased to \$500). This requirement is listed both in the operating agreement between FJL and BC Housing as well as in the attached city bylaw. I acted as an on site resident manager for FJL in apt 320 for many years and I know that there has never been more than 5 or 6 units offered at that rate, when the requirement is for a minimum of 9 with a stipulation that this number be increased over time and the number has not changed since the building opened in 2015.

The property manager Julia Lis works for Terra Property Management which was contracted by FJL to manage the property. Several years ago Julia moved Serge Lis into apt 315 and public court records show that she has had proceedings in family court with a Serge Lis, making her written denials of any family ties to this tenant unbelievable. This type of conflict of interest would put her license at BCFSA in jeopardy and ought to also be a problem for the operating agreement with FJL since there is more than just the appearance of a conflict, which BC Housing policy documents for housing societies state are the standard to be used by societies.

Myself and my girlfriend Victoria Mansfield were living in apt 313 until about 8 months ago when we were evicted for non payment of rent. The rent was being paid direct to the landlord by the ministry and every rent payment for 8 years always arrived as expected. However after we raised concerns with her about Serge Lis, she first denied any association and then issued us an eviction notice saying rent had not been paid. The ministry says they mailed it along with all other ministry checks, and said only the landlord could request a duplicate. The next month the landlord said the same thing - that the rent check did not arrive for 313 only but did for all other units. The landlord (Julia Lis) refused to submit a request to the ministry for a reprint and then won the dispute resolution hearing at RTB on the basis that rent had not been paid. Using the standard of balance of probabilities, it is unimaginable that the rent check for just this one unit would not arrive two months in a row when it had for the past 100 months, that no other tenants on ministry assistance had their checks go missing, that this strange event would happen immediately after we raised concerns about a conflict of interest with the landlord, and that the landlord would refuse for 2 months to request a reprint despite many requests from us for her to do that, and her spending plenty of time completing other forms and submissions related to our apartment in the context of the RTB hearing. This is a patently unethical practice that property managers at Terra Property Management have used at other times in other buildings to obtain an order of possession when they simply dislike a tenant for personal reasons and it's something that ought to be criminal as well.

2. Neighbourhood Housing Society, formerly the Main and Hastings Housing Society, operates 3 buildings and also has an operating agreement with BC Housing. The building at 40 East Hastings St called Oasis has been refusing to fill vacant units for well over a year now. Approximately half of all the 80+ units in the building are vacant at the moment while up to 100 homeless people sleep on the pavement directly outside the entrance of this building in the heart of the downtown Eastside. The city of Vancouver makes homeowners pay a vacancy tax if their house or apartment remains unoccupied as a means of addressing the lack of affordable housing in Vancouver, and I find it both absurd and offensive that a non profit housing society in the downtown Eastside that is registered as a CRA approved charity on the basis of helping the homeless would be allowed to get away with this for so long without a very good reason. The problem here is that there is no oversight of the day to day operations at housing societies once they begin and the boards of these organizations often become dominated by a single person who essentially appoints others to rubber stamp their wishes. The person at NHS who calls all the shots put her hair dresser on the NHS board, then her blind computer repair person (who she met through her day job at an org that helps disabled people). She also installed two more of the people she met through this position as the on site maintenance and manager for Oasis, in what amounted to positions that the board would never review the performance of regardless of how many complaints were made about their lack of training and suitability. After these people still refused to follow basic health and safety standards after a year of my complaints, I reported them to WorkSafeBC who did a site inspection and issued a scathing 17 page review full of mandatory orders that were supposed to be implemented within 30 days. More than two years later not one has been complied with.

Why have they not complied with these orders and why are they not filling vacant units as quickly as possible? If BC Housing cannot get these matters done I will proceed with asking the city to fine them and the media to cover these matters. Charities using public funding ought to be held to higher standards than other entities yet this one seems to have no standards and nobody seems to notice or care. I resigned from my job at the society in protest of things like this - mostly their refusal to replace smoke detectors as required by their insurance policy and city bylaws, then their refusal to repay me when I replaced over 20 of them myself using my own money.

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2 attachments



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486 KB



Screenshot_20250216-225711.png
362 KB