

RE: Nov. 4 Committee of the Whole, Agenda item 10.1 Recommendation 3

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of the Justice and Outreach Committee of Dublin Street United Church. Among our concerns are Guelph's homelessness level and lack of affordable housing. The church is regularly visited by Guelphites seeking help with housing. Our funding can help only a few.

As one measure to improve the housing situation, the committee supports a vacant home tax. We suggest that it should be high enough both to encourage occupancy and to raise funds for affordable housing initiatives. We feel that the proposed revenue neutral 2% does not meet that level. Staff's survey of other cities shows net revenue only if the city imposes a 3 or 4 % tax. The only one lower, Hamilton, has no revenue data available.

We suggest a mandatory declaration, effective enforcement provisions, and a 4 % tax with revenue quickly assigned to fund affordable housing initiatives.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Snell, member Dublin Justice and Outreach Committee