

Please include the below in the meeting package for the council to review. Thank you!

I don't think the proposed tax goes far enough.

To be effective Guelph's Vacant Homes Tax should include:

1. A vacant home tax rate of 4% or higher. This will generate a meaningful incentive to bring housing back into use, generate funds to be applied to affordable housing, and generate funds to pay for the administration of the program.
2. Mandatory declaration. Mandatory declaration is the only equitable way of ensuring that all vacant housing is subject to the program and the best means of identifying all of Guelph's legitimately vacant homes.
3. Direct surplus revenue to the local non-profit housing sector for quick application. See Hamilton's Affordable Housing Funding Program.
4. Establish a vacant homes registry and annual inspection to circumvent demolition by neglect. Cost to be covered by vacant home owners.
5. Establish effective penalties. Set fines at \$10 000+ for individuals and \$50 000+ for corporations.
6. Initiate the program ASAP.
7. Consider expanding the tax to non-residential properties to encourage (re)development of underutilised properties.

Kevin Bowman