

Cullen pushes to ease taxes on apartments

Bay Coun. Alex Cullen wants to further reduce the property tax burden for apartment buildings and other rental complexes.

"We need to continue the march towards fairness," Cullen said.

All tax ratios are developed in comparison to the ratio of a regular residential home or condo. Multi-residential buildings pay 1.7 times more than a home and city staff are recommending it stays at that ratio.

Cullen says the ratio should be reduced to 1.6 and he will try to

convince councillors on the audit, budget and finance committee to agree.

The committee meets Monday.

City council has reduced the tax burden for multi-residential buildings since amalgamation, all the way down from 2.17. Each time that ratio is lowered, homeowners have to make up the difference through their taxes.

Cullen, who's running for mayor, said he isn't afraid to make the suggestion in an election year.

"I'm standing by my principles," Cullen said.

John Dickie, chairman of the Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization, said the ratio for multi-residential buildings should be dropped to 1.3 to even out the tax burden with homeowners.

"The average condo is 32% larger than the average apartment," Dickie said, adding the city should compare a high-end apartment with a low-end condo for the tax analysis.

— Jon Willing