

Committee rejects tax rate rollback

Group argues multi-unit residences paying too much into city coffers

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A city committee has voted against giving renters and landlords a tax break at the expense of homeowners, but the issue isn't dead yet.

That means the 3.77% property tax increase for homeowners city council has already approved could rise even higher if council reconsiders lowering the multi-residential tax ratio.

The audit, budget and finance committee voted Monday to stay with the status quo of multi-residential buildings paying 1.7 times the amount paid by homes in property tax.

There's a push, however, to bring the burden closer to



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that borne by homeowners and council will consider the shift when it debates the issue April 14.

Bay Coun. Alex Cullen asked the committee to support lowering the multi-residential tax burden ratio to 1.6. The Eastern Ontario Landowner Organization wants the ratio to be 1.3.

Geoff Younghusband of the Tenants and Landlords for Fair Taxation said the multi-

residential tax ratio should be on par with homeowners.

"Tenants have been paying more than their fair share of taxes for many years," Younghusband told councillors Monday.

Deputy treasurer Ken Hughes said the decisions made by council in the past have significantly reduced the tax burden for multi-residential buildings.

Make up difference

Hughes said homeowners would make up the difference in any further reduction of the multi-residential tax burden.

Ottawa has the second-lowest tax burden in Ontario for multi-residential buildings.

Cullen encouraged his committee colleagues to con-

tinue lowering the ratio, but the committee accepted a staff recommendation to leave it unchanged.

The tax increase for homeowners would be 4.27% if the multi-residential tax burden is reduced to 1.6.

The tax shift to residential class from multi-residential would equal an extra \$15 in taxes for the average homeowner.

Somerset Coun. Diane Holmes offered a compromise motion to reduce the multi-residential burden to 1.65, but that was also rejected. Reducing the multi-residential tax burden to 1.65 would mean an extra \$7 for homeowners on their tax bills.

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