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News | Columnists / Joe Warmington
Artsy-fartsy deal stinks to high heaven.

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Just what the east end needs: A hippie-style commune for poor, starving artists.

And paid for by you!

Perhaps, no matter who is elected by the voters Oct. 25, we can also let the future tenants, and those leftist councillors who slammed this disgrace through, decide who the next mayor is, too?

Why not? They just do whatever they want anyway. All other rational thinking disappeared a long time ago.

"There is a dearth of housing in this area for artists," Councillor Pam McConnell said in somehow trying to justify this disgrace.

What there is a dearth of is common sense on city council.

But what there is an abundance of is communists, socialists and blatant waste-a-holics.

The stench of this deal hits one's nostrils from miles away because every part of the purchase of the circa 1899 Harris House heritage home at 450 Pape Ave. to create subsidized rental work and living spaces for artists stinks to high heaven.

Despite staff originally not recommending it, and saying there was no money for it, council in a suspect-move decided to go ahead and borrow from another department's budget about \$2.2-million — \$1.9-million of which is to purchase the Salvation Army property, once known as Bethany Home for pregnant teenagers, at the corner of Pape and Riverdale and an additional \$275,000 for closing costs.

They are making it up as they go — at your expense.

It looks like a sweet deal for so-called artists who don't seem to want to survive on the market economy like the rest of us have to. Others who want to live in this neighbourhood have to come up with \$600,000.

This feels like a heist. Somebody call Chief Bill Blair.

"People borrow money all the time," says Councillor Paula Fletcher. "It's an opportunity to do something very positive."

Positive for whom? For artists perhaps. Not for taxpayers.

"Maybe the city can give it to me," jokes single mother Donna George, who lives in below standard Toronto Community Housing with her five children. "I am not an artist, but I would like to live there."

"Artists can get a part-time job to make ends meet," said neighbour Greg Gherini. "Make it a place for single mothers because they have it tougher."

Front-running mayoral candidate Rob Ford said he will open up, and rip up, deals like this when he becomes mayor.

"There are 70,000 people waiting to just get into (housing) and now we're setting up special housing for these people?" Ford told the Sun's Don "Pistol" Peat. "We can't afford it."

Just what is going on here?

"I don't think they know," said an angry Councillor Doug Holyday. "I don't think there is any proper plan for that property."

I talked to Fletcher last night who admitted, "it could end up as seniors housing or something else."

You know we are hard on Fletch but I can tell she really believes she is doing the right thing.

"I am sick and tired of the west end getting all of the housing for artists," she explained.

"Joe, it's a very low paying job and they struggle. Don't worry this is going to work out. Next year we will have a social housing provider to partner with and we will get the money back. Next year, we will go there and I will show you. You and me."

I am already looking for my bandana, paint brush and peace sign.

The alleged redneck and the former commie. It's a date.

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










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1. Each visible minority will be represented including aboriginals .
2. Each gender will be represented: lesbian, queer, transvestite, unsure and perhaps even normal(straight).
3. Rappers will have priority.
4. Prior artistic training will not be a requirement as it may contravene access to housing laws.
5. Bomb-making will not be considered an art at this time. However, a court challenge may force a change to that restriction.

Dudley Do Right, August 28th 2010, 1:17pm

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