

Delivered via email

The Honourable Carole James
Minister of Finance

September 30, 2020

Dear Minister James,

We are writing to you to highlight many apparent cases of avoidance of the Vacant Homes and Speculation tax in our community. We have included a list of 35 address that are either vacant or under construction yet are listed as the owner's primary residence, according to information provided by our local MLA's office. Of these, 14 are clearly not primary residences and another 21 are highly suspect. **We ask you to investigate and take appropriate measures to address this problem.**

Our community has suffered as investors and speculators have acquired real estate in our neighbourhoods. By our count, fully 15% of all single-family homes in the UEL are vacant, not regularly occupied or under delayed construction (64 out of 442 single-family homes). Vacant properties have contributed to higher crime, as squatters have moved in and criminals have become aware that they will not encounter residents if they break in. Empty homes have also eroded the general sense of community as some residents now have no neighbours on either side. **It is unacceptable that the owners of vacant homes are causing damage to our community and yet appear to be avoiding the Vacant Homes and Speculation Tax.**

In several letters to our community, your Ministry has highlighted that the School Tax that all our single-family residents pay goes to supporting the government's plan to tackle the housing crisis. **Vacant homes and the problems they bring to our community are clearly part of the housing crisis.**

The UEL CAC is calling on the Ministry of Finance to investigate the many cases of apparent illegal avoidance of the Vacant Homes and Speculation Tax in our community. The UEL Community Advisory Committee would be happy to guide an enforcement officer through our community. In a very short period of time, a simple tour could take a big step in helping us return our community to families and residents instead of speculators.

Regards,

UEL Community Advisory Council

Cc: The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A. Vancouver Point Grey
The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Jonn Braman, Manager, University Endowment Lands