

EDC reversed by separate board

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The Toronto Catholic District School Board will continue to collect education development charges (EDC) for non-profit housing after reversing a decision to exempt affordable housing projects from the levy.

Trustees voted last week to rescind their earlier decision after considering the projected loss of revenue, explained board chair Oliver Carroll, (Ward 8, Scarborough) who reported that the board collects about \$400 per unit.

"You can't recover the money," Carroll said, noting the board doesn't have any other means of replacing that funding.

Carroll, who had supported the original decision to exempt social housing projects from EDCs, said he changed his vote last week to give the board "a chance to get a handle on where we're going from a facilities perspective before we give up the money."

However, Ward 5 Trustee Maria Rizzo (North York), who initiated the push to exempt affordable housing from the fee, noted the money raised through development charges could not be used for the classroom.

"The funds cannot be used for capital or operating costs as dictated by provincial legislation," she said in a statement.

"The board is selling off surplus land, properties that were purchased 10 years ago have not been utilized."

Rizzo continued saying, "This money could not pay for one teacher, one computer or one textbook."

Rizzo also noted that only 315 units of non-profit housing were created in the city last year. About 400 units are projected for development this year, she said.

Carroll said trustees would begin to review the board's capital plan in December.

"There is no doubt this will be one of the factors (in that review)," he said. The board recently purchased five schools from the city's public board and has about \$15 million available for acquisitions.