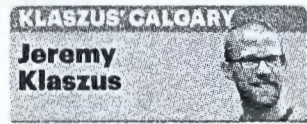




## ROSEMARY

MYMETRO

# How to avoid progress on secondary suites



**KLASZUS' CALGARY**  
**Jeremy Klaszus**

Thank you for purchasing the 2015 edition of the Canadian City Councillor's Guide to Spinning In Circles on the Issue of Secondary Suites™.

This year's pamphlet is a small miracle. We'd decided late last year to cease publication due to poor sales nationwide. Most large municipalities endorse allowing homeowners to rent out basement apartments and granny flats citywide. Canadian city councillors, by and large, have no interest in our particular endeavour.

To our surprise, however, interest has remained strong in one city — enough to keep us afloat one more year. Here's to you, Calgary! Follow these guidelines

any time your council looks like it might actually make progress on this issue:

1. Stay lost in the weeds. People often say "don't get lost in the weeds," by which they mean don't focus on minute details at the expense of the big picture. Zoom out, and you'll see the situation anew and act with clarity. No. Don't do it. The weeds are your friends. Cling to them. Get so turned around in them that your fellow councillors feel lost, too. When people try to pull you out, sigh and say: "It's just not that simple."
2. Ignore expert advice. Any number of local organizations will peddle so-called "expertise" to try and get your council unstuck on this issue. Don't listen. The local Chamber of Commerce — what do they know about the business of running a city? Agencies on the front lines

of your city's housing shortage — what can they possibly contribute? Smile and nod, but ignore it all. You know best, and what you know is weeds. (See Guideline No. 1.)

3. Ignore lessons from other cities. Inevitably, some know-it-all will say, "[Insert city name here] has citywide suites and there's no mayhem there." Here you must imply that human beings in your city are fundamentally, inexplicably, biologically different than human beings in that city. "This is not [insert city name here]," you must say disdainfully. "This is Calgary."
4. Talk about parking. It doesn't really matter what specifically you say, so long as you use phrases like "worried about parking," "parking concerns," "inadequate parking" and so on. Keep people more worried about where to put cars than

where to put humans, and your city will remain stuck.

5. Push for a plebiscite. Pull off this neat trick and you can pander to the electorate while evading your responsibility as a civic leader all at once! Emphasize that the issue is too important to be left to politicians: "Let the people decide." Not only does this save you (at least for now) from the discomfort of taking a stand, you can justify the entire exercise by calling it democracy.

Follow these guidelines, and your council will stay bogged down for the foreseeable future, likely ensuring a 2016 edition of the Canadian City Councillor's Guide to Spinning In Circles on the Issue of Secondary Suites™.

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couldn't make it that night. She didn't even know what this play was about — she just came because she lives close by, and she loves theatre.

This was the first winter in decades Jane had spent in Toronto. Normally she escapes to a small town in India where she'd once been stationed as a secretary in the foreign service. She told me I have to go one day.

The play started, and while we watched, I had the sense I had a new friend.

After the play, Jane asked if I was walking east, and I was sad to tell her I wasn't. "Oh, I just thought then we could walk together," she said.

We said goodbye at a pair of big doors, and Jane

the people and culture of the Indian town (after learning that not saying "hello" in the streets was no indication of lack of local friendliness).

When we reached her building, she gave me her email with instructions to write when I got home, so she'd know I was safe. We'd see another play sometime, we said.

When I got home, I wrote Jane, but the email bounced back. She's unGoogleable, which is both sad and fitting — a stranger crush who is a digital enigma.

Jane will be wonderful company for someone else, sitting alone in a theatre, some other time, who talks to the stranger beside them.

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**DR. NETTIE COLEMAN**

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