

## REAL ESTATE

# Priorities need to change



The media is doing a great job of keeping the upcoming civic election in the spotlight, so I hope a large number of Calgarians will be persuaded to get out and vote.

The new council will have some tough decisions to make that will have long-lasting results so I hope candidates have been taking note of the major issues.

Coverage in this newspaper has been most interesting, but so have the letters to the Editor where taxpayers are able to make their opinions known. Many letters have been about the plight of the homeless as well as the climbing cost of real estate in this city.

It was interesting to see one this week from a reader in Penticton who suggested the person who couldn't find a house in Calgary for \$350,000 should move to the Okanagan town where there is no pollution, no rush hour and lots of jobs.

Another reader responded with actual prices of homes in McKenzie Towne where he obviously enjoys living.

Having a roof over one's head should be a given for everyone living in this rich city yet, in a recent column, United Way of Calgary president Ruth Ramsden-Wood noted there are as many people in need of housing in Calgary as there are households in Medicine Hat. There is no easy solution, but the problem has to be addressed by council — and not just talked about.

Calgary Homeless Foundation president Wayne Stewart was quoted in a column in the New Homes section saying, "We will not regenerate the downtown until we have homes for everyone." He said that 58,000 households are at risk because they are spending more than 30 per cent of their household incomes keeping roofs over their heads.

Incumbent or newly elected aldermen must be prepared to change some priorities to address the task at hand.

It's interesting that in my ward I have only received one piece of election literature to date. The would-be alderman talks first about ward issues before listing what are described as city-wide issues — and that's where homelessness and secondary suites get mentioned.

Another wannabe grabbed headlines with the idea of extending dog licences to three years instead of one. That's not a priority in my book.

Doing away with the ward system would be a help, but so would supporting more Habitat for Humanity projects and getting behind the Mustard Seed's proposed tower on 10th Avenue. That's the kind of action required to make a difference.

In fact, a show suite will be opened next Saturday in the Mustard Seed's Creative Centre at 106 11th Avenue SW, allowing the public to see what a typical furnished studio apartment would look like. There's no walk-in steam shower, but there is a comfortable, 260-sq.-ft. suite with kitchenette and bathroom — one of 350 that will be rented for a percentage of a tenant's income. The tower will also provide 60 one- and two-bedroom units for very low-income people.

I applaud the Seed for having the foresight and courage to tackle the problems in getting the tower built; it's going to make a difference.

On the other end of the scale, it's good to see London at Heritage Station getting built. Westcorp Properties is building four towers for 1,200 residents that fit well into the city's new Transit Oriented Development guidelines, linking the building to the Heritage Station LRT with a covered pedestrian walkway.

Take note, councillors, and do what you can to encourage — and allow — other developers to build high-density housing along LRT lines.

No more roadblocks like those thrown up at Crowchild Inn site which seems an ideal place for residential towers with its location across from Dalhousie Station.

Another great location for LRT-accessible housing is at Crowfoot Centre. I shake my head to see so many vehicles sitting at car dealerships there. I'm sure they would prefer to sell the valuable land if an alternative location could be found.

The next big decision for councillors is how to design the promised southwest LRT line. Good for Madeleine King who suggested that the two schools by Westbrook Shopping Centre — and even the shops themselves — might be turned into a transit terminal.

Now that's forward thinking, so long as residences are included.

DAVID PARKER WRITES AROUND TOWN COLUMNS ON TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY IN THE HERALD'S BUSINESS SECTION. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 830-4622 OR INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA

## HOT PROPERTIES

A glance at the ever-changing real estate landscape in Calgary and area. Each week, we highlight four noteworthy homes — from the dreamy to the affordable and the not-so.

### HIGH



The architectural details are stunning, from the recessed pot lights on the cedar soffits, to master tile work and curved wall niches for your priceless artifacts.

The nine photos on the MLS website certainly leave you wanting to see more of this nearly finished 5,100-sq.-ft. home in the top-tier neighbourhood of Elbow Park/Glencoe.

A two-sided fireplace divides the living room and dining room while the kitchen sports lots of granite and high-end Sub-Zero appliances. Three bedrooms all have ensuites, including two bedrooms that share an ensuite with a six-person steam shower. You could have a family get-clean party in there!

Add to that a rec room, theatre, wine cellar and three-car garage, and you've got yourself a showstopper for \$2.9 million.

MLS#C3286543 ReMax

### LOW



There are some lovely touches in this well-maintained two-storey in the northeast community of Erin Woods.

The living room and dining room are separated by an open beam that adds richness and ties into the gorgeous oak hardwood flooring.

The kitchen is spacious with loads of cupboards and even room for an eat-in table.

The 1175-sq.-ft. house has had some worthwhile upgrades such as triple glazed, low E windows, new hot water tank and roof shingles and has a list price of \$317,900.

The yard has a patio and grassy area for kids to play and the home is near schools and Erin Woods park.

MLS #C3283628 Maxwell

### RURAL



If you want new with an urban feel, but love the look and smell of the country, this could be the place for you.

Located 10 minutes east of the city in Tanner Estates, this 1,587-sq.-ft. bungalow was built in 2005 and is listed at \$729,000.

A custom-built home with a triple garage, it has high ceilings, an open-concept floor plan, gas barbecue hookup, a two-tier rear deck and attached gazebo.

The kitchen is stunning with blond wood cabinets and black appliances and the adjoining living room has a sleek black tiled fireplace. That's the urban part. The rural comes in the form of 2.6 acres of peace and quiet.

MLS#269519 myrealty.ca

### VACATION



Head east one hour to a lovely weekend retreat at Hidden Valley Golf resort., listed at \$224,900.

This 1,000-sq.-ft. cottage has a massive, wraparound deck and landscaped yard with a firepit and a view of the ravine.

Inside, the cedar cottage is large with an open living room, corner wood stove and dining area. It's all pine interior walls and flooring, except for the rock wall behind the fireplace.

The cottage has four bedrooms and two three-piece baths. The kitchen has new appliances.

The resort is open April 15 to Oct. 15 and the yearly fee of \$3,825 includes a golf cart, two golf memberships and the community water supply.

MLS#C3288365 Remax

— Compiled by Michele Jarvie, Calgary Herald



AFTER

Removing extra tables and repositioning special pieces to create focal points transformed this apartment from a crowded, unfocused place, below.



The former green and yellow walls in the dining room are now white, allowing the antiques to stand out.



BEFORE



AFTER

Moving the furniture results in a cozier conversation area, with a pair of side tables forming a coffee table within easy reach of the seats.



BEFORE