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On the record

Every month, the Kitchener Citizen publishes "Notes from City Hall" which Kitchener City Councillors can use to communicate with residents.

In addition to highlighting upcoming community events, I often use this as an opportunity to present my position or invite discussion about issues that pertain to citizens.

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

'Ya Basta' is an expression in Spanish that means 'that's enough'. Every time I learn about a proposed new tower development, those are the words that come to mind.

It's not that I am against development; it is that many proposals far exceed the official plan and/or zoning bylaws in height and density and tend to be for small, expensive one and two bedroom units.

I came across an academic article recently that argues, "the housing crisis will not be solved by building more of the same, like condos and suburban homes for single families". Another article stated, "densely built, low-rise environments are more space and carbon efficient, while high-rise buildings have a drastically higher carbon impact".

Another quote, "intensification can lead to an erosion of housing options for those on low incomes". Or how about this: "there is every reason to believe that [the] hi-rise... apartment dwelling has adverse effects on mental and social health". Finally, "a range of policies are needed to curb speculation, increase the supply of non-market, genuinely affordable housing and ensure tenants have adequate protections through strong rent-control policies".

I don't pretend to know the solution to the housing crisis, but I do think that City staff got it right in their New Residential Base Zone document which states that "the maximum building height shall be 25 meters". According to the 2021 Growth Management Strategy, the City of Kitchener is well on its way to meeting its targets and required growth rates. I look forward to the day 'Ya Basta' isn't forefront in my mind.

I welcome your thoughts.