

mobilized to defend their homes. The Herongate Tenant Coalition organizers have hosted community meetings as well as set up a network of building committees so each tenant knows who to go to in the event of an eviction notice or dispute with their landlord. The meetings have helped strengthen already existing relationships of mutual aid and solidarity as well as to build collective power to fight the evictions.

Unfortunately, on September 30th Timbercreek evicted most of the 500 residents served with notices in May. A few decided to stay but were eventually intimidated into leaving by the company. However, as one of the HTC organizers, Josh, pointed out, with the group recently started and with the vast majority of the residents still to receive an eviction order, the fight is just beginning.

As the struggle against Timbercreek intensifies, the Herongate Tenants Coalition has been exploring different tactics to take on the developer. They are in the process of filing a case before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, demanding the evictions be cancelled on the grounds they represent a racist attack on the Somali community. They are also looking at the successful example of rent strikes in Hamilton and Toronto as possible models for their resistance.

By mobilizing and publicizing the evictions, tenants have already managed to win some concessions from Timbercreek such as increased compensation and the right for evicted tenants to move into vacant units in the same neighbourhood. However, these minor reforms do nothing to stop the forced displacement of the neighbourhood. Nor can the tenants rely on the support of politicians or local non-profits, all of whom have lined up behind Timbercreek and accused tenants of being "negative and divisive" by not accepting their evictions. As Josh put it, "When you support a politician, you support your own eviction". The end of the relentless cycle of rising rent, deteriorating living conditions and mass evictions can only happen through direct, collective action of tenants themselves.

#### ABOUT | CONTACT

If you have a story to tell about evictions and displacement in Metrotown,

please call Sean at 604-365-9009, email us at [organize@stopdisplacement.ca](mailto:organize@stopdisplacement.ca)

[www.stopdisplacement.ca/stop-demovictions-burnaby/](http://www.stopdisplacement.ca/stop-demovictions-burnaby/) | <https://www.facebook.com/stopdemovictions>

We Won't Go is affiliated with Stop Demovictions Burnaby, a grassroots community campaign to stop evictions and mass displacement in Metrotown, and is published on the occupied territory of the Qayqayt, Kwikwetlem, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam nations.

The case of the Herongate Tenant Coalition offers a lot of lessons for our own struggle here in Metrotown. It shows the connections between capitalism, white supremacy and mass displacement as racialized communities become the first targets for eviction and gentrification. It also shows the importance of building strong networks of solidarity and support to prevent social isolation and to organize resistance. Finally, by connecting with tenant struggles in Ottawa, Hamilton, and around the world, we can see that evictions are not unique to one neighbourhood but rather are the result of a global colonial and capitalist economy built around property. This system structured around working-class exploitation and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their land will not change unless we force it to do so. By establishing these connections between our movements we can build collective power, resist evictions and recreate our neighbourhoods around the needs of our communities. As Ikram, another Herongate organizer put it, "We will stop Timbercreek no matter what, I'm not moving!"



Herongate organizer Ikram Dahir. Source: [herongatetenants.ca](http://herongatetenants.ca)

# We Won't Go!

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## WE BEAT CORRIGAN! STOP DEMOVICTIIONS MOVEMENT STOPS BURNABY'S JUGGERNAUT MAYOR

By Stop Demovictions Burnaby

After 16 years of iron-fist rule, Derek Corrigan has been forced out of Burnaby City Hall by the community power of grassroots organizing against demovictions. Close to four years of movement-building has taken many forms – from door-knocking, to marches, to occupations, to reports and analyses – tied together by the relentless efforts and courage of Metrotown tenants, who continue to stand up against the landlord-tenant system which places property above people. Very rarely are incumbent mayors, especially incumbent mayors with as many years of power as Corrigan had, beaten by opponents with no political experience. But Hurley beat Corrigan by a significant margin – over 6000 votes! This is a

significant shift from the last municipal election, which Corrigan easily won with close to 70% of votes.

Voter turnout in Burnaby this year increased from under 25% to 33.4%. By building a movement that stimulates the political imagination needed to fight for a different system of land relations, Stop Demovictions is combating apathy. In a *Burnaby Now* post-mortem of Corrigan's failure, Chris Campbell argues that Corrigan created his own downfall by failing to address housing and homelessness. But this leaves out the role of Stop Demovictions, which tirelessly exposed Corrigan's commitment to mass displacement, and maintained a steady momentum of actions that gave low-income residents an outlet to politicize their frustrations and anxieties. The activism of organizers and residents created the political space for Hurley to position himself as an alternative to Corrigan's reign of mass evictions.

Linda, a renter from Metrotown who organizes with Stop Demovictions Burnaby, recognizes the importance of our movement in forcing this significant political shift. She explains, "I think it had a lot to do with us. Corrigan was

very proud of what he was accomplishing with his ‘downtown Metrotown,’ but when we started putting out there what the plan was costing people like us – people being evicted with nowhere to go – [things changed].” Stop Demovictions Burnaby not only created the term “demovictions,” which has become a part of mainstream public discourse, but also forced the word into the mouths of electoral candidates. By refusing to give up our fight in the streets, we created an electoral political vacuum that municipal candidates were forced to scramble to promise to fill with inoffensive reforms – all that is possible within a profit-driven economic system hinged upon stealing and commodifying Indigenous territories.

In a post-election interview with the CBC, Hurley stated that he’ll work with BCA candidates and Corrigan’s cronies amiably, and adds that he’s worked with most of them before and even considers many to be personal friends. How Hurley’s “friends” will respond to his anti-eviction platform remains to be seen. While Stop Demovictions Burnaby is building a mass movement to resist evictions and giving people space to speak out, Hurley has simply piggy-backed on our work. For example, his campaign used and cropped an image found on our Facebook of the July paint-in for his promotional material, appropriating the political aesthetics and energies of Stop Demovictions in order to win office.

## MY BUILDING HAS BEEN SOLD, WHAT DO I DO?

### 1. Know Your Building’s Status:

- Check <https://www.bcasessment.ca/> to see when buildings are last sold
- Buildings must undergo an initial report, first reading, public hearing, second reading, third reading before the final adoption (process timeline varies)
- Call the City of Burnaby (Clerks) 604-294-7290 or email clerks@burnaby.ca and ask how far along your building is in the rezoning process

### 2. Know Your Rights Under the Burnaby Tenant Assistance Policy

- 4 months notice before eviction
- 3 months rental compensation ; 4 months if in building for over 10 years
- Assistance finding a new place through a Tenant Relocation Coordinator

### 3. Know Your Rights Under the RTA

- As of 2019, landlords can only increase rent by 2.5% annual increase for rent
- Landlords must give written, three month notice in order for the rent increase to be valid

### 4. Fight Back

- Attend monthly Town Halls at the Burnaby Neighbourhood House
- Attend bi-weekly organizing meetings at Marlborough Elementary School Host a meeting with neighbours in your building. Contact us for resources and help with planning ([organize@stopdisplacement.ca](mailto:organize@stopdisplacement.ca) or 604-704-8076)

There is a heavy skepticism, amidst hope, directed toward politicians in Metrotown, including Hurley. At our Spend the Surplus press conference preceding the election, Metrotown resident and organizer Allan stated “promises were made to be broken, that is the truth of it.” Adele, another Stop Demovictions organizer from Edmonds, who has noticed similar patterns in her area of Burnaby, described how although she is content that the nightmarish Corrigan is gone, she feels she would be naive and oblivious to think of Hurley as a fairy who can come in and fix the corrupt mess of the housing system. Linda hopes Hurley follows through on his promises, stating “I really hope Hurley fulfills everything he said he would because it is desperate times. This is not just something you can say you are gonna do and not do it – we are talking about lives.”

As Hurley’s term begins, Stop Demovictions Burnaby’s work will intensify. While we must celebrate our movement’s successful dethroning of the demoviction king, this victory is far from a reason to stop fighting. Our imaginations and hopes will not be restrained by what politicians inside colonial chambers bound by capitalist walls think is possible. Stop Demovictions will not only hold Hurley accountable, but relentlessly challenge him to go beyond a moratorium as we continue organizing in the streets to defend Metrotown as a working class and Indigenous neighbourhood.



Herongate tenants protesting their eviction. Source: [herongatetenant.ca](http://herongatetenant.ca)

## WORKING-CLASS RESISTANCE TO MASS EVICTION

By Sean Phipps

On May 7th 2018, 500 residents of Herongate, a working-class, predominantly Somali neighbourhood in Ottawa, received eviction notices, demanding they leave by the end of September. Five days later, tenants formed the Herongate Tenant Coalition to resist these evictions and fight for their vision of the neighbourhood.

Like Metrotown, Herongate is the site of a proposed mass up-zoning and gentrification orchestrated by private development corporations and city hall. However, unlike in Burnaby where multiple developers have been driving the evictions, in Herongate the majority of the neighbourhood is owned by one large company, Timbercreek Asset Management. Owning over 21 000

units and worth \$3.5 billion, the Toronto-based company is the fifth largest landlord in Canada. In what is now a familiar story, the company plans on demolishing the townhouses which make up most of the neighbourhood and leaving the over 4000 people with nowhere to go. Simultaneously, building managers have stopped doing basic repairs, using poor building conditions and neglect as another tactic to drive people out.

The vast majority of Herongate residents are working-class people of colour. The neighbourhood is the heart of the Somali community in Ottawa, seeing as over 40% of residents are Somali. It is also home to a number of community services and cultural institutions, which are also set to be demolished. The crisis facing Herongate shows clearly the racist nature of capitalist real estate development, with Black, working-class communities targeted for destruction to ensure developer profits.

Since the first evictions were announced, tenants have

## UPCOMING STOP DEMOVICTIONS BURNABY EVENTS

**Organizing Meeting** - Tuesday **November 27th** at 4:30PM at the Tim Hortons at McKay Ave and Central Boulevard

**End of Year Potluck** - Wednesday **December 5th** at 6:30PM at the Burnaby Neighbourhood House at 4460 Beresford St.

**Organizing Meeting** - Tuesday **December 18th** at 6:30PM at the Marlborough Elementary School Portable at Royal Oak Ave and Sanders St.