



Secord lawsuit certified as class action

DANIELLE MILLEY

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The lawsuit filed by those affected by the explosion and fire at 2 Secord Ave. last summer is one step closer to going to trial.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Joan Lax certified the action as a class proceeding on April 23. The certification process is an important step in the legal action against Toronto Hydro-Electric System, which is identified as the defendant in the order.

"It means a judge has decided this is a proper case to proceed as a class action," said Ted Charney, one of the lawyers representing the tenants in the case. This means the judge found the plaintiffs had enough in common to bring the action forward as a group.

This is important as a class action allows a group of people to have access to the court in situations where the case would be too expensive or too complex for one person to sue on his or her own.

Charney said the judge also identified the common issues of the case in the certification order.

There are about 1,000 residents involved in the class action, which Charney said is average for this kind of action.

Now that the action has been certified, it will continue to move forward.

"We continue to prepare the case for trial," Charney said, adding it would likely be a year before it gets a trial date.

In the meantime, he said, they would "explore the potential for resolution.

"We always try to explore the potential for settlement," he said. "It's in the best interest of the tenants to settle quickly."

The action stems from the events of July 20 where an explosion in a underground hydro vault and resulting fire on a quiet rainy Sunday morning caused the evacuation of residents from the 22-storey highrise northwest of Danforth Avenue and Dawes Road.

Thick smoke billowed outside and filled the building, travelling through the elevator shaft and the ventilation system causing the most smoke damage to the units on the top floors. Resident were forced to flee, many with only the clothes on their back.

Many sought shelter with friends or family, while more than 100 families stayed in emergency shelter provided by the city at hotels around Toronto. They were out of their homes for six weeks and repair work still continues on the building.

In a previous interview, a Toronto Hydro spokesperson had no comment on the lawsuit as it is still before the courts.

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