

Proposed By-law Requiring Display of Addresses on Buildings

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, amended this Clause by adding thereto the following:

“It is further recommended that the following motion be referred to the Works Committee for further consideration:

Moved by Councillor Moscoe:

“It is further recommended that municipal numbers affixed on commercial, industrial and multi-residential properties be illuminated.”)

The Works Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (October 21, 1999) from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services:

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval in principle for a proposed by-law that would regulate the display of municipal house numbers on streets.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the City Solicitor in consultation with the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services introduce a by-law to require the affixing of municipal numbers at the front of properties as set out in Appendix ‘A’ of this report;
- (2) passage of the by-law be advertised by the City Clerk and the by-law come into force 60 days after its passage by City Council; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto, including the introduction of any Bills that may be required.

Background:

This report is intended to supplement a companion report respecting a proposed by-law requiring the display of addresses at the rear of properties abutting lanes.

Comments:

The City of Toronto needs a policy regarding the display of street address building numbers. An effective policy respecting the assignment and display of building numbers will have the effect of:

- (a) facilitating the dispatch of emergency service vehicles;
- (b) reducing accidents and impediments to the flow of traffic due to motorists slowing down to search for an address;
- (c) reducing inconvenience to businesses, shoppers and visitors;
- (d) improving the consistency and historical integrity of address-based property records of governments and businesses;
- (e) facilitating the automation of various address-based computer systems; and
- (f) reducing the loss of goods and mail due to incorrect deliveries.

Under section 210(112) of the Municipal Act, City Council may pass by-laws:

“For numbering buildings and lots along any highway, beach, park reserve or any other property in the municipality that it is considered necessary to number by the council, and for affixing numbers to the buildings and for charging the owner or occupant with the expense incident to the numbering of the lot or property.

Such expense may be collected in the same manner as taxes, and, if paid by the occupant, subject to any agreement between the occupant and the owner, may be deducted from the rent payable to the owner”.

Under the current Municipal Act, City Council does not have the explicit authority to pass a by-law requiring owners to post municipal numbers on streets or lanes. However, the section does contemplate the City imposing a numbering scheme and implementing it itself, if necessary. A by-law might therefore be prepared requiring an owner or occupant to post or display their municipal numbers in the required form, failing which the municipality may do so at the person’s expense.

Several of the former municipalities have policies respecting the display of municipal numbers:

- (a) Etobicoke district requires a minimum size of 75 mm (Municipal Code);
- (b) Toronto district requires a minimum of 100 mm for single family residential properties and 150 mm for all other properties (Council policy); and
- (c) North York district requires that the municipal number be posted on the wall of the building so as to be clearly visible from the street (By-Law No. 31490).

As a result of the efforts of several departments to automate numerous property based services, it has become evident that a uniform approach is needed to the assignment of municipal addresses to buildings and lots. At the present time, addressing functions are carried out by works, planning, building inspections, information technology, emergency services, tax assessment staff and the public. This has led to a myriad of official and unofficial addresses being used in various databases which degrades the quality of municipal records due to the dubious relationship of an address to its property.

Over the next several months, as part of our business process review and in consultation with the affected Commissioners, we will arrange for the development of a consistent policy respecting the assignment of addresses to buildings and lots and for the transfer of this function to one department.

Finally, the former City of Toronto has the authority to name and rename private streets and lanes and number the buildings or lots along private streets and lanes pursuant to the special legislation that was granted to the former City of Toronto. Similar legislation should be sought for the rest of the new City in order to complete the City's jurisdiction for the numbering of properties abutting private streets.

Conclusions:

The introduction of a consolidated numbering by-law with provision for the mandatory display of house numbers on streets is desirable because of the benefits to community security, vehicular traffic flow, the management of address-based records and computer automated dispatch systems.

The proposed by-law should also apply to private roadways once the appropriate authority is obtained from the Province.

The concerns addressed in this report have been brought to the attention of the Province, which has sought input with regard to amendments to the Municipal Act.

The municipal numbering program should also include a publicity campaign advising residents of the need to post clearly visible numbers on their buildings. We will report on this matter following consultations with the City Clerk.

The essential provisions of the draft municipal numbering by-law are set out in Appendix 'A'.

This report has been prepared in consultation with staff of the City Solicitor's office.

Contact:

W. (Wally) Kowalenko
City Surveyor
Tel. (416) 392-7664; Fax: (416) 392-0081

E-mail: wkowalen@city.toronto.on.ca

Appendix 'A'

Municipal Numbering By-law:

The official record of buildings and lots shall be based on the addressing components of the City's database and property maps. In numbering the buildings and lots, due regard will be given to lot configurations defined under the Registry Systems and the Assessment Act.

The by-law will permit the assignment of a municipal number to buildings and lots.

Posting of Municipal Numbers:

It will be mandatory for all owners/occupants of buildings to display authorized municipal addresses on streets and lanes, where an unnamed lane abuts the rear of a property.

Municipal numbers shall be displayed by owners/occupants on a contrasting background.

The numbers shall be a minimum size of 100 mm for single family residential properties and 150 mm for all others at a maximum setback of 15 metres from the roadway by which primary access is gained to the property. Greater setbacks will require larger numbers to be determined from a sliding scale having regard to site constraints, traffic flows etc.

Cost of affixing numbers and directional signage to be recoverable in the same manner as taxes.

Charges for Address Changes:

There will be a minimum charge of \$500.00 for an address change. Full schedule of costs for applications for multiple address changes to be developed.

Effect of By-law:

Given that this by-law will impose new requirements upon the owners and occupants of property within the City of Toronto, it is suggested that the by-law be advertised and not come into force until 60 days after its passage by City Council.

Existing By-laws:

By-laws respecting the municipal numbering of buildings and lots in former municipalities to be repealed.