

November 23, 2007

**LICENSING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE:**

City Council on November 19 and 20, 2007, referred the following Motion to the Licensing and Standards Committee:

**M164 Using Camera Phones to Report Graffiti, Litter and Maintenance Issues**

*Moved by Councillor Palacio, seconded by Councillor Mihevc*

**SUMMARY:**

Residents who observe graffiti, litter or other needed maintenance on City property often do not want to go through the trouble of calling the City once they get home. The locations and severity of these issues is also often difficult to convey verbally. The popularity of camera phones and digital cameras has multiplied in recent years. City Staff should take the simple step of setting up an email address directed to Access Toronto for residents to send digital pictures, particularly from a camera phone, to report litter, graffiti and other needed maintenance, such as sidewalk cracks, and advertise this in the normal rotation of bus shelter ads made available for City use.

The City of London, England (Borough of Lewisham) has done this quite successfully. This service provides a quick and convenient way for issues to be brought to the City's attention. Once they have emailed or text messaged in the picture of the issue, they receive an email or text message back once it has been dealt with. In London this information is instantly transferred to a Google map on the City's Web site that shows all of the pictures received and what action has been taken. This is an empowering way to activate the thousands of joggers, dog walkers and average pedestrians armed with a camera cell phone who tour City parks and streets each day, into the eyes and ears of City staff who cannot, on their own, be aware of everything that is happening.

The set-up costs associated with providing this service would be almost non-existent, as it would rely on the staff and systems Access Toronto already has in place, merely ensuring a response when the matter has been acted on and actively promoting this highly effective method of reporting litter, graffiti and maintenance issues. A picture says a thousand words.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the City Manager report to an upcoming meeting of the Licensing and Standards Committee on the feasibility of promoting the use of camera phones by the public to report litter, graffiti and maintenance issues as described above.

for City Clerk

M. Toft/cd