



## STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

### Street Naming Policy – “Exceptional Circumstances”

<b>Date:</b>	August 27, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Etobicoke York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	City Surveyor
<b>Ward:</b>	Ward 6
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2009\Cluster B\TEC\EY09029

#### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to the request by the Etobicoke York Community Council for the interpretation and application of the “exceptional circumstances” criterion set out in the Toronto Street Naming Policy. Specifically, the policy states that streets should be named after living persons only in exceptional circumstances.

Although Council has delegated the naming of streets after living persons in exceptional circumstances, Community Councils are unable to exercise such delegation due to the lack of guidelines for the interpretation and application of the term “exceptional circumstances”. Due to the subjective nature of this matter, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to characterize the meaning of the term “exceptional circumstances” in the form of a guideline that would meet the needs of Council.

#### **Financial Impact**

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

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#### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting held on January 15th, 2008, Etobicoke York Community Council adopted Item 13.23 - Naming of Proposed Private Lanes at 156, 160 Evans Avenue, 829, 833, 839 Oxford Street and the matter was subsequently adopted by City Council on January 29 and 30, 2008. On May 27, 2009, City Council enacted By-law 614-2009 naming the two private streets as “Ruby Lang Lane” and “Cormier Heights”.

At the January 15th, 2008, meeting Etobicoke York Community Council also requested staff to clarify the meaning of the “exceptional circumstances” criterion used in Council’s Street Naming Policy and to explain why it was not used in the naming of the private streets “Ruby Lang Lane” and “Cormier Heights”.

## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

EY13.23 <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ey/bgrd/backgroundfile-20869.pdf>  
Staff Report <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ey/bgrd/backgroundfile-9396.pdf>  
By-law 614-2009 <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2009/law0614.pdf>  
Street Naming Policy [http://www.toronto.ca/mapping/street\\_naming/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/mapping/street_naming/index.htm)

## **COMMENTS**

The report from the City Surveyor (January 9, 2008) on the naming of the private streets “Ruby Lang Lane” and “Cormier Heights” included comments from the Etobicoke York Preservation Panel:

“that these two living individuals are both worthy of having streets named after them, but it does not appear that the ‘exceptional circumstances’ criterion has been met.”

Staff was unable to obtain the rationale for the statement by the Etobicoke York Preservation Panel.

The City of Toronto Street Naming Policy, Criteria for Name Selection, states:

“3. Names of living persons should be used only in exceptional circumstances.”

Although Council has delegated the naming of streets after living persons in exceptional circumstances, Community Councils are unable to exercise such delegation due to the lack of guidelines for the interpretation and application of the term “exceptional circumstances”. Due to the subjective nature of this matter, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to characterize the meaning of the term “exceptional circumstances” in the form of a guideline that would meet the needs of Council.

It should be noted that City Council’s Street Naming Policy provides a flexible and adaptable framework enabling broad interpretation of the guidelines as circumstances would warrant. The criterion “names of living persons should be used only in exceptional circumstances” is consistent with the notion of flexibility and adaptability and provides Council with the discretion to interpret the term “exceptional circumstances” and debate the suitability of the proposed names in any manner it sees fit.

This report has been prepared in consultation with the City Solicitor’s office.

**CONTACT**

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**SIGNATURE**

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