



June 5, 2017

Executive Committee  
Committee Room 1, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

## Re: Licensing exemption for Fraternities and Sororities

Dear Chair and Members,

Many post-secondary institutions call our City home. These institutions bring a vibrancy to our city, and are critical parts of our urban fabric. Along with these institutions, fraternity and sorority houses are often found in many of our neighbourhoods. These houses are home to a number of residents that live in a similar condition to those who occupy rooming houses.

For many years, a number of fraternity houses in neighbourhoods adjacent to the University of Toronto, have been identified as sites of increasingly problematic behaviour. Issues with garbage, extreme noise, and property standards violations are common place in the neighbourhoods that house fraternities just off of the University of Toronto campus. Despite attempts to deal with these issues – including local working groups, attempts to set up protocols, and conversation with representatives of fraternities – they unfortunately persist.

I have also recently been receiving very disturbing reports regarding the rise of incidents of sexual assault at a number of fraternities – incidents that often, due to the stigma faced by survivors, can go unreported and unsolved. As a city, we must be clear that the prevalence of these incidents at these fraternity houses is unacceptable.

I have been advised that fraternities and sororities operate outside of the formal University framework, and thus exist in a grey area regarding disciplinary action and appropriate follow-up after incidents and in cases of ongoing negative and problematic behaviour.

Currently, fraternity and sorority houses are exempted from the regulatory framework in place for multi-tenant houses. Licensing these houses not only provides the City with a mechanism to effectively respond to these concerns, but also entitles those who live in the houses a guarantee that their living environments meet building code and safety standard requirements. It can also provide the city with a mechanism to deal with houses that are chronically unsafe, for both residents and visitors, and those with

demonstrated issues related to problematic behaviour. Without a proper regulatory framework, fraternity and sorority houses post a risk not just to residents, but to those who live in and visit them.

This issue is becoming increasingly critical in local neighbourhoods, and I therefore respectfully request that Executive Committee adopt the following recommendation:

**Recommendation:**

1. Executive Committee direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards as part of the forthcoming report on multi-tenant houses to review and report back with recommendations on whether fraternity and sorority houses should be licensed as multi-tenant houses (rooming houses) and the feasibility of removing the exceptions for fraternities and sororities in Chapter 285, Rooming Houses, Section 285-8 Exceptions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Cressy', with a stylized flourish extending from the bottom right.

Joe Cressy  
City Councillor  
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina