

St. Stephen's  
Community House

Conflict Resolution & Training

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November 13, 2017

City Clerk, Attention: Nancy Martins, Administrator  
Planning and Growth Management Committee  
100 Queen Street West, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, West Tower  
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

by email to [pgmc@toronto.ca](mailto:pgmc@toronto.ca)

Please accept this submission regarding the Zoning By-law and Zoning By-law Amendments to Permit Short-term Public Rentals that are to be discussed at a public meeting November 15, 2017.

From its roots in west central downtown, and now across Toronto, St. Stephen's Community House has been providing a range of community services for over 50 years. From the beginning, we has worked closely with the city to support the communities we both serve. Affordable housing and the health of local neighbourhoods have always been priorities for St. Stephen's.

We want to begin by echoing the need that the By-Law minimize any negative impacts on housing affordability and availability. The experience of our Homeless Services program is of an urgent, immediate need for shelter and permanent housing in Toronto. In fact, we urge you to strengthen the response to any negative impacts the By-Law has on housing may have, to completely mitigated, not just minimize them.

We also expect the By-Law to have an impact on the community mediation service run by our Conflict Resolution & Training program. Community mediation services provide neutral, independent, free mediation for neighbourhood conflicts over noise, garbage, parking and the other issues raised in your October 19 staff report. An increase in people living in a neighbourhood for any period of time, and especially if those people are almost by definition unfamiliar with local community standards and expectations, can be expected to add to conflicts of the kind described. Our community mediation service will expect to see this effect on referrals we get from Municipal Licencing and Standards, City Legal, the Toronto Police Service, Councillor's offices, 311 and others. We would like to remind the City that it's Community Service Partnership with St. Stephen's only funds mediation in the city west of Etobicoke (the city funds Warden Woods Community Centre to provide community mediation in Scarborough.) When St. Stephen's acquired the city funding for community mediation in North York a few years ago we felt we had to provide the service in Etobicoke as well, despite not being funded to.

The fact that the By-Law limits short term rentals to principal residences and requires registration is helpful to us. That arrangement will assist in bringing the parties to mediation who need to be there to resolve immediate issues, and who are important to improving ongoing neighbour relationships over future conflicts. That the principal residents of the properties rented out will be on-site and available to dispute resolution is an advantage over the circumstances of long term rentals, where owners of

properties whose tenants are involved in neighbour conflicts are often literally and/or metaphorically too distant to contribute to solutions.

We're happy to see the emphasis placed on the effects the By-Law will have on other by-laws related to neighbourhood relationships and standards. Perhaps more important than any specific change, is the fact that the regulation of short term rentals is happening in the midst of wider changes in the ways the City responds to and manages conflict in general. St. Stephen's has seen this change happening in the training and referral relationship we've had with the Police over several decades, in the training we do for Corporate Learning and Leadership Development, in the mediation pilot we participate in at the Committee of Adjustment, in the way the City now reaches out to find alternative dispute resolution practitioners to sit on its regulatory boards and agencies, and in the report Municipal Licencing and Standards has been asked to make to the Licencing and Standards Committee about their use of alternative dispute resolution. We look forward to seeing how this By-Law will part of that broader revision of the approaches, services, options and obligations people in conflict are given.

Thank you for accepting this submission. We welcome any questions or requests for clarification or further information. We look forward to continuing to work with the City to make Toronto an even better place to live, and a model for the world.

Yours,



**Peter Bruer, Manager**  
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