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**CC:** "Dan DiSabatino" <dandisabatino@yahoo.ca>, <councillor\_ainslie@toronto...>  
**Date:** 3/1/2013 5:46 pm  
**Subject:** Proposed Place of Worship By-laws

Hello,

I have been made aware of the proposed changes to the zoning by-laws by the Toronto Faith Coalition. It is unlikely that I will be able to attend the meeting at City Hall on Wednesday but I would like to have my concerns on the record.

I am extremely grateful for the positive progress that has been made already in addressing the TFC's concerns.

My comments/concerns below are offered as a private individual but, I am sure, are typical for all worshipers and church leaders.

1. The definition of auditorium size. The church I attend has fixed seating which constitutes approximately 60% of the actual floor space. While the trend is towards flexible seating, the ratio of seats to floor space remains constant. Why are City Planners using 90% of floor space in their calculations?

a. It should also be noted that, for most churches, a 'full house' is typically only 80% of available seating.

2. Parking space requirements should be calculated on typical seating arrangements rather than square-footage. The internal architecture of a building has no bearing on the number of parking spaces required.

a. Compared to other places of assembly, the ratio for the number of parking spaces required is actually less as many cars bring whole families, not just individuals or couples. Has this been taken into consideration?

b. Approximately half of church attendees are youth and children who do not drive. Surely they do not need parking spaces!

c. Why do the proposed parking standards require 3 - 4 times the number of parking spaces than other places of assembly [which would be mostly adult]? This would appear to be arbitrary and discriminatory.

d. What evidence is there for the need of such a high parking ratio?

3. Places of Worship are compatible with uses in light industrial zones yet the City has agreed to places of worship only in the office industrial zone. I live in Scarborough and there are many (close to a dozen) churches along Progress Avenue and Bellamy Road North. They seem to live in peaceable harmony with all their 'light industrial' neighbours. Why does the City see the need to change this? There are hundreds of these

churches/mosques/chapels located in [affordable] light industrial areas without issue. Why is this now an issue?

4. It is recognized that charitable institutions are exempt from property taxes but the net benefit to the community by these organizations far outweigh loss of revenue to the City. My church provides many community services including youth counselling, supervision of compulsory service hours (for the City's wayward youth), etc. Many other churches provide food banks, day care, senior activities, youth drop-in's, free ESL classes and so on. It seems to me that the City should be making it as attractive as possible to attract churches into their local communities.

A report from the Toronto District School Board suggests a strong need to better support students' social and emotional well-being. TDSB officials said the census is a wake-up call since 73 per cent of high school students and 59 per cent of grades seven and eight are worried about their future. Sixty-six per cent of high school students said they're under stress often or sometimes. One in three high school students said they feel like crying. Helping these kids is a key job of the faith community and they need to be encouraged in every way possible and with the least hindrance possible. As one might say, "We don't want to cut off our nose to spite our face" by imposing arbitrary and unfair restrictions on the very organizations that offer so much benefit to the City!

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

David Harrison, President

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