



Ontario Association of Architects

June 9, 2015

VIA E-MAIL

His Worship John Tory
Mayor, City of Toronto
100 Queen St. W.
City Hall, Second floor, West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor,

The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) writes with great concern over the fact that not a single architect was appointed to the City of Toronto's Committee of Adjustment panels. Tasked by the *Architects Act* to "regulate the practice of architects...in order that the public interest may be served and protected", the OAA is concerned that the public interest is not being served.

As was detailed in our original correspondence to the Planning and Growth Management Committee when it considered item PG2.5 ("feasibility and advisability of requiring relevant professional experience or education as a qualification for appointment to the Committee of Adjustment"), based on their skills, expertise, and knowledge with planning and building applications, architects are uniquely positioned to comment on Committee of Adjustment applications.

Feedback from prior Committee of Adjustment members and applicants has raised significant concerns about the appointment process—notably a politicization of what is intended to be a technical and independent quasi-judicial body—and the fact that architects have summarily been relegated from significantly under-represented (previously 2/28 appointees were architects) to non-existent (0/28 appointees).

In February, we engaged City staff with concerns about the composition of the Committee of Adjustment panels and the appointment process. On item PG2.5, City staff had recommended against "requiring relevant professional experience or education", arguing that the existing appointment policy was rigorous enough and already required the presence of architects on these panels. It has become apparent that City staff's recommendation on item PG2.5 was inadequate.

At that time, the OAA unsuccessfully advocated for City staff or the Planning and Growth Management Committee to reconsider this position and to mandate a requirement for the appointment of licensed architects (and other licensed professionals). We cautioned that an opportunity to significantly improve the composition and functioning of the Committee of Adjustment (an issue raised in 2014 during item PG34.22: "Towards a Functional Committee of Adjustment") was about to be, and then subsequently was, squandered.

While we hope to re-open that discussion and work with the City and the Planning and Growth Management Committee on material changes to the current appointment policy, we must collectively turn our attention to the immediate matter at hand: the proposed set of appointments.

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When considering item CC7.8, we ask that you and members of Council vote against the proposed set of appointments, and that you commit to a new process that will ensure adequate representation from architectural and related professional groups that are intended to compose these panels (as named in the appointment policy).

While we understand there is an extremely short time frame and there are other significant concerns before the Council, we cannot understate the importance of correcting this mistake.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toon Dreessen', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Toon Dreessen, Architect
OAA, MRAIC, AIA, LEED AP
President

cc. City of Toronto Council
Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner & Executive Director of City Planning