St. Stephen's Community House
Conflict Resolution & Training

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October 21, 2016

Councillor Cesar Palacio
Chair, Licensing and Standards Committee
100 Queen Street West
M5H 2N2

Dela Ting
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Councillor Palacio, Ms. Ting,

With apologies for the lateness with which it is being sent, I'm sending this letter to urge the Licensing and Standards Committee at its October meeting to agree to the motion proposed by Councillor Holyday, asking MLS to (my paraphrase) report on options for using community mediation more effectively in managing it's relationships with the public.

The City of Toronto has been demonstrating the effectiveness of community mediation by funding it through community grants to St. Stephen's Community House and Warden Woods Community Center for the past 30 years. We are both part of a network of community mediation programs in eight other municipalities and regions across Ontario. St. Stephen's has a long, if informal relationship with MLS for the referral of cases just like Councillor Holyday is suggesting, and on top of that a history doing training for MLS staff. We're also a trainer in communication, conflict resolution and negotiation for the City's Corporate Learning and Leadership Development courses, available to all MLS staff.

St. Stephen's has long-standing case referral, training and consulting relationships with the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Community Housing and other parts of the City, and with some Councillors. We've just been selected as vendor of mediation services for a pilot project in the Committee of Adjustment.

It was MLS in the City of Mississauga who asked council there to fund a community mediation service several years ago. Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre receive the grant, and hundreds of cases have been referred, especially, but by no means limited to, noise disputes. Other sister services of ours have formal relationships with municipal government to refer cases to community mediation, including Community Justice Initiatives in Kitchener Waterloo, and Mediation Services in Winnipeg. There are community mediation services in cities across Canada and hundreds of them in the United States. The assessment MLS is being asked to do will find years of experience and data to work with.

The existing relationships and experience described above give the Licensing and Standards Committee has an opportunity to build on good work the City is already doing, and to get maximum value from a community investment already being made to good effect. Finally, I'll mention that St. Stephen's is a

social enterprise in providing dispute resolution services, the kind of service provider favoured by the City's Social Procurement Program.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you or the Committee has, or to provide further information. Thank you, and I look forward to the outcome of your meeting.

Sincerely,

Peter Bruer, Conflict Resolution & Training Manager
St. Stephen's Community House

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c.c. Councillor Holyday