



January 19, 2016

Planning and Growth Management Committee

c/o Nancy Martins  
10<sup>th</sup> floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Councillors:

**RE: PG9.3 – 170 AND 194 Evans Avenue – Ontario Municipal Board Appeal – Request for Direction Report**

I am the principal of Phoenix Montessori School. The school has been providing quality childcare and Montessori educations to children from 18 months to 12 years old since 1999. We were previously located in a closed TDSB school which was sold to a condo corporation, Minto Group, in August 2014. Since that time, we have been searching for another location in which to run our school. Unfortunately, the new Employment Zoning By-law created quite some difficulty for us finding a suitable location. We had 85 children and 75 families dedicated to our school at the end of June 2015 with 21 full time employees. A small storefront location was not going to suffice if we wanted to continue our operation and grow.

After looking at multiple properties and being told by the city that they were not suitably zoned, we contacted nearly 20 churches to see if we could rent space from their already appropriately zoned properties with no luck. I also had several discussions with Minto Group, the developer who purchased the TDSB school where we had been operating, to ask if they would let us stay in the school until their negotiations with the City were complete and they were ready to demolish. They told me they had a demolition permit for September 1, 2015 and had equipment ready to go on site so we would not be allowed to stay. Time had now run out and after discussions with people in the community I felt I had no choice but to move forward with the 170 Evans Avenue site.

The location at 170 Evans Avenue is a great site for us. The property has stood vacant for more than five years. It is still in Etobicoke which is where most of our families live, 50% of our families live or work within 7 km of the Evans Avenue building. This site is isolated from neighbouring businesses as you can see from the picture. It has a good amount of property that has allowed us to have a fenced yard for the children which is a requirement of the Child Care Early Years Act. The other important requirement of this act is windows to floor space ratio and this building is wrapped in windows. We have arranged to lease the whole building which allows us increased security for the children. The ingress and egress from Evans Avenue is excellent for our drive-by drop-offs and pick-ups with substantial driveway and parking areas located on site. We have never been advised that our operation has caused any traffic issues on Evans Avenue. The location to the Gardiner provides easy access for parents travelling to downtown from north and central Etobicoke as well. With 50% of our families living and/or

working within 7 km of the school, I believe the local community benefits. This location will definitely be an asset both for the residential and employment areas in supplying accessible childcare.

The environmental study that we commissioned has shown that having this childcare in this location will not impact the other businesses in the area, not from an air quality perspective nor from a noise perspective. At the Committee of Adjustment hearing it was presented that another school has been operating within 0.5 km of the Evans Avenue building and the committee members were informed by the owner of that school that none of her children have ever been bothered by the noise or air quality, therefore allowing the Committee of Adjustment to determine that similar conditions would apply to our school.

Our proposed use is appropriately located within the character of existing uses. The property is located on the periphery of the employment area and there are existing residential areas on the east side of Islington Avenue. There is also an existing private school that used to be a TDSB school along with a community centre and outdoor park area also on the east side of Islington Avenue. These uses exist harmoniously with the employment area to the west of Islington Avenue – I believe our use will as well. In fact, the businesses directly to the west of us have shown their support for our being in this location.

This ward is a thriving one with many condo communities and townhouse developments going up in the near future. Childcare is a diminishing commodity due to the stringent new criteria required for opening childcare spaces and the new Employment Zoning. Therefore it is in the best interests of both the residential and employment community to allow an already established childcare facility to continue to operate in the Etobicoke area. I know of three childcare operations that closed their doors due to these new regulations and their inability to find appropriately zoned space within their community in Etobicoke.

It is for these reasons that I hope you will consider supporting Councillor Grimes' request to have the appeal rescinded. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Lori Priolo

Principal

Phoenix Montessori School