

Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Carolyn Johnson <johnso3@bell.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2017 9:19 AM
To: Planning and Growth Management Committee
Cc: YQNA Planning Committee; Councillor Cressy
Subject: PG 17.4 Staffing Resources

Categories: Communication

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of York Quay Neighbourhood Association (YQNA). We represent residents and business owners along the lake from Yonge to Rees Street, but take an active interest in development proposals over the wider area that will affect us, including the East Bayfront and the South Core.

We are very well aware of the strong pressure for development in the City as a whole, and especially on the under-utilized lands along the rail corridor and the lakeshore. As more and more residents, including families with children, live in dense, high-rise units, the need for public and semi-public open space for recreation becomes more urgent. As well, families need community centres, schools and daycare operations.

As staff note in the report, all of these matters lead to more complex assessments of applications and more complex agreements to secure the much-needed community benefits.

For many years there had been constant pressure from Council to cut the cost of City services, and the City Planning Division among others has faced a reduction in staffing levels. The unfortunate result has been staff burn-out and slower response times in processing development applications. This in turn has enabled more developers to appeal to the OMB on the basis of delay, leading to further diversion of resources to deal with the appeals and attend the hearings. As noted in the report, there have been significant increases in the number of hearings and the lengths of those hearings.

YQNA has had some experience with the OMB and its processes, and we understand how time-consuming it can be to address the appeals, even if a settlement is reached. We also appreciate the time that City staff devote to community consultation, and understand that staff have to be recompensed for their time in the evenings and at weekends when residents are available to participate.

Therefore, YQNA urges the Committee to strongly endorse the recommendations in the report to allocate funds from reserves to hiring more staff to take care of the workload.

Yours Sincerely,

Carolyn Johnson

Secretary YQNA