



October 29, 2019

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Nancy Martins

RE: GV 5.1 Special Committee on Governance - Summary of Findings

Dear Chair Stephen Holyday and Members, Special Committee on Governance

This is to provide our comments on the report and recommendations arising from the Special Committee on Governance (Committee) work relative to its mandate to consider the impacts on the City's governance structure and processes arising from the reduction in the size of Council, and make recommendations to City Council on any further changes to its governance structure.

Overall tone of the report

It reminds one of a WWII slogan. "...Keep calm and carry on" i.e., that in general, things are fine, and there may be some tweaking required. On the contrary it is our impression that (1) the pressure on councillors, particularly in the central south/north corridor is intense, and unsustainable, and (2) the level and quality of discussion has declined in Standing Committees and in City Council due to the reduced number of Members, as Members are unable to cope with the range and complexity of the agendas that they are being asked to weigh in on. At this stage, it is impossible to know whether there are longer term implications of this concern.

Themes without specific Proposals

The report recommends (Recommendation #1) that the interim governance model, established December 2018, be continued as is. There are several other matters ("themes") that the report discusses in a preliminary manner, but (except for one matter – the organizational structure of the Committee of Adjustment) does not bring forward recommendations for action. This is disappointing and appears to be contrary to the direction of the Committee at the September 25, 2019 meeting:

- to report to the November 1, 2019 meeting with proposals for improving the City's governance model and a plan to consult the public on those proposals and the financial impacts of this additional work.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.GV4.2>

Bringing Proposals Forward

In the absence of proposals from staff, we are bringing forward recommendations with respect to certain of the themes that merit further investigation.

a) Public engagement and civic literacy

We support moving forward on a review and recommend

- *That City Council direct the City Manager to report to Executive Committee with a detailed proposal for a review (including financial impact assessment) of the City's engagement strategies, including*
 - *an assessment of the effectiveness of the current strategies and the resources applied to engagement efforts across the organization;*
 - *current strategies analysis if other municipal engagement strategies;*
 - *assessment of the best model to deliver purposeful, timely, effective engagement that serves a diversity of stakeholders including the public, City Divisions and City Council*

b) Office of Neighbourhoods and support for neighbourhood associations

We support the proposals by IMFG's Alexandra Flynn that the City support neighbourhood associations, and recommend:

- *That City Council direct the City Manager to report back on resource requirements for an Office of Neighbourhoods that would*
 - *undertake research*
 - *develop resources*
 - *create/maintain a centralised data bank and map*
 - *provide advice and referrals for new and established NAs*
 - *coordinate divisional information for neighbourhoods.*

We agree with the staff report's comments about the sensitivity of the relations between City and Neighbourhood Associations (NAs), and the need for assurances that the City would not compromise the autonomy and independence of NAs. In that regard we agree that there is a need for minimum criteria for NAs to be serviced by the City; however these criteria, for example, regarding the degree of disclosure of financial records, will need careful consideration, and not be invasive or detrimental to the activities of the NA.

c) Functions of City Councillors and possible delegation

No comment

d) Electoral Reform

No comment

e) Standing Committee operation

No comment

f) Council Advisory Bodies

No comment

g) Public Appointments

No comment

h) Onboarding and support to public appointees

No comment

Committee of Adjustment (June 2019 meeting)

We agree that the distribution of Committee of Adjustment (CofA) applications and workload is unevenly distributed across the four community council areas. However, we believe the issue is more fundamental than can be solved by a redistribution of the work. There is a disconnect between the CofA and the neighbourhoods affected by applications.

Therefore we support a modified staff report recommendation

- That the City partner with a post-secondary institution to research the efficacy of community impacts of the Committee of Adjustment system *including consideration of a more community based approach (viz. City of Toronto of the 1970's)*.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

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Cc: Chris Murray, City Manager
Meg Shields, Director, Corporate Policy

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.