October 28th, 2019

Re: MM 11.13

The Cabbagetown BIA lends its support to MM 11.13. The motion suggests clear, common sense adjustments for how the City engages communities. The process leading to the City's leasing of 233 Carlton has left many businesses and residents feeling uninformed and inadequately considered. The recommendations of this motion will help assuage the concerns of the neighbourhood today and create a more collaborative environment going forward.

BIAs ought to serve as a conduit between City Hall and their community. As an agency of the City of Toronto, many depend on the Cabbagetown BIA to supply critical information. When we are unable to do this, the community's faith in the BIA (and the City itself) diminishes. City divisions should be in active contact with local BIAs so we can readily disseminate materials of interest.

Further, local organizations represent a wealth of local context. Some city-staff might view local organizations as hurdles to be passed. Community groups should be appreciated for what they are: collections of passionate residents and businesses who want their neighbourhood to succeed. This mandate is not contrary to that of the Shelter, Support, & Housing Administration. By engaging with BIAs and resident associations the SSHA and all City divisions can better understand the specifics of a neighbourhood, and how best to achieve their objectives.

The reduction in the size of city council has lead to further alienation between the decisions made by councillors and the effects on their constituents. The more neighbourhoods a councillor is to represent, the less they can appreciate the specifics of each. Now, more than ever, City Hall must depend on BIAs, residents associations, and other community groups as partners in the creation of policies that reflect the needs, concerns, and desires of all Torontonians.

Thank you,
Christopher Chiasson
Executive Director, Cabbagetown BIA