

March 19, 2019

Planning and Housing Committee,
City of Toronto,
10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Re: Amendments to Zoning By-Law for the City of Toronto 569-2013 and Zoning By-Law 138-2003 (The Municipal Shelter By-Law)

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

It is disturbing to see the way these proposed zoning changes are processed without proper involvement of the community residents most affected. The notices of public meetings are limited in their ability to reach concerned residents and then the public meetings are held during a workday when most residents are busy at their occupation and shelter occupants and supporters are then disproportionately represented at the meetings. City council has already approved a bylaw that new shelter locations and purchases can be carried out without any prior consultation with the neighbours affected.

This is democracy in action?

As is so common today, we seldom get to see both sides of any issue, just the view of the media or proponent presenting the issue.

It is therefore disturbing to see the one-sided view of the PHC report. There are no pros and cons reported which would leave the counsellors free to draw their own conclusion, just views fully in favour of the proposed changes based on a distorted attendance at previous public meetings.

Now, about the proposed changes:

These zoning changes are clearly aimed intensifying shelters in those areas that already have many. I understand that the Annex now has more shelters than any other part of the city, for the simple reason that they are rarely objected to by Annex residents. It is obvious that the SSHA has run out of locations in these targeted downtown areas due to the existing location criteria. So their solution is to simply change the criteria in order to concentrate them more in an area of little resistance. Maybe SSHA just needs to work a little harder to find appropriate locations.

The PHC report states that the zoning Bylaw Amendment supports shelters across the city and within all neighbourhoods, as was the original intention of the 250m separations and the 80m distance to a main thoroughfare, passed by 4 of

the original 5 community councils. The PHC then conversely states that this has not worked because most shelters end up downtown. This is all the more reason to maintain the separation distances and avoid over concentration in any one neighbourhood. Removal of the 80m distance allows shelters to be located deeper into residential neighbourhoods.

The report states that the SSHA considers concentration when selecting sites, but also finds that there are valid reasons for having them close together. This may be valid for their purposes, but not for the local residents.

None of this report considers the affect on property owners, taxpayers or existing residents. Some shelter types have been shown to have an adverse affect on nearby property values and neighbourhood safety.

A respite shelter located on my block in the fall of 2017 created safety concerns and the councillor assured us of extra police patrols on the lane behind the shelter (used regularly by local residents) but the local police liaison officer advised us that this was not possible due to a lack of manpower. The officer also assured us that we would have problems with the shelter occupants. Women on our block felt unsafe and stopped walking their dogs on the lane at night. I returned home one Saturday afternoon to find 3 shelter occupants sitting and drinking on my driveway off the lane, then urinating on my garage wall before leaving (photographed by a neighbour). Other neighbours crossed the street before passing in front of the shelter where there was usually a group of men congregated, smoking. Some neighbours reported abusive language and harassment to the counsellor's office.

With most shelters being located downtown (many in the Annex) it is unlikely the supporters of shelters in other areas will ever be affected, so it relieves their conscience to support more concentration downtown. Even with the current criteria, I already have 4 shelters within a block of my home, 1 in each direction.

Another aspect not considered is that with more shelters provided in any given area, the more it attracts more shelter users to those areas, creating a spiral of more need in the same area. This intensification has a very adverse affect on the community at large, which is obviously not part of the consideration by PHC. Each neighbourhood consists of property owners, taxpayers and residents that deserve more consideration in the intensification of shelter locations.

The PHC and SSHA should investigate more creative solutions for locations. For example, amending Bylaws to locate shelters in *Employment Areas* would provide better, cheaper facilities. Occupants could be bussed each afternoon from convenient pickup hubs (i.e. Bloor W., Queen E. & W.) to a shelter and returned in the morning. The buses would only take the number of occupants

suitable to the capacity of the shelters. This would avoid occupants that have been turned away from a full neighbourhood shelter hanging out in the neighbourhood because they have nowhere else to go. Shelter occupants are looking for a warm, safe place to spend the night, not necessarily for a shelter with a nice neighbourhood ambiance.

Most residents agree with the need to help those requiring a shelter but shelter location intensification should not overwhelm any particular community which this amendment is sure to do.

Yours truly,
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Cc: Councillor Layton