



September 14, 2019

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Nancy Martins, Secretariat
email: phc@toronto.ca

Re: PH8.5 Feasibility of Implementing a Support Centre for Committee of Adjustment and Toronto Local Appeal Body Matters

Dear Chair Ana Bailao and Members, Planning and Housing Committee,

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised over 30 member organizations. Our members have an active interest in ensuring that residents have information and advice readily available to them in regard to the Committee of Adjustment (CofA) processes and appeals to the Toronto Local Appeal Board (TLAB).

Further to direction from City Council the staff report discusses the feasibility of establishing and implementing a support centre for CofA and TLAB, but concludes that this is not feasible and merely recommends that the report be received.

The report does not appear to recognize the fundamental imbalance of information and resources between applicant and neighbours in committee of adjustment cases but especially in TLAB appeals. Residents tend to be unfamiliar with the planning policies and processes in regard to severances and minor variances, the purview of the CofA. The information available to them from the City web site is meagre, and the timeframe under which they have to respond is mean. Many seek help from the Councillor's office and /or a local residents association. Understandably, such assistance is of variable amount and quality. The situation is many times more disadvantageous to residents if the case proceeds to a TLAB appeal.

In our opinion the concept of a support centre is valid, and was well on the way to being proven with the establishment of the Local Planning Support Centre by the previous provincial government. It appears that its untimely closure this spring relates more to a predilection on the part of the current government to assist developers rather than residents, than being a reflection on the effectiveness of the Centre itself. The report's allusion to the unsuccessful experiment in mediation

entirely misunderstands the differences in role of the support centre and the aborted mediation pilot¹.

Further we note that the City staff did not consult with the public regarding their review.

We recommend that the Planning and Housing Committee refer the matter back to staff with direction that staff reconsider their analysis and that public consultation be undertaken before coming back to the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours truly,

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Cc: Russ Brownell, Policy, Planning & Project Advisor, Court Services
Susan Paolucci, Manager, Tribunal Operations, Court Services
Michael Mizzi, Director, Zoning and Committee of Adjustment

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.

¹ Note that before the mediation pilot began we advised the City that we felt that the mediation effort was a waste of time, being based on a flawed understanding of the nature of the dynamics involved in CofA hearings.