



BUILDING A GREATER GTA
Building Industry and Land
Development Association

PH11.14.1

December 9, 2019

Via Email

Members of the City of Toronto Planning & Housing Committee
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Attention: Nancy Martins, Secretariat

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

Re: Item PH11.14 – Committee of Adjustment Application Analyses and Service Improvements

With over 1,400 members, the Building Industry & Land Development Association is the voice of the land development, home building and professional renovations industry in the Greater Toronto Area. As the voice of this industry, BILD has always sought to maintain a constructive working relationship with all levels of government in examining ways to better serve the communities in which it operates. It is in this spirit that we are writing to you today.

This letter has a particular focus on BILD's members in the professional renovations industries. The renovation industry in the Greater Toronto Area is a substantial contributor to the economic growth and vitality of our great city. In 2018, in the City of Toronto, professional renovation generated \$6.0-billion in investment value and 55,899 jobs paying \$3.3-billion in wages. Recent reports by the CMHC estimate the renovation industry represents over \$16.1-billion in the GTA alone and \$77.9-billion Province-wide. The importance of this industry to the City of Toronto was recently noted in the 2018 Toronto Employment Survey presented to the Planning and Housing Committee at its meeting on March 20, 2019.

On April 4, 2019, the Planning and Housing Committee unanimously approved the following motion:

*"That the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning report to the Planning and Housing Committee by the end of 2019 on additional options to improve service standards for the Committee of Adjustment, such as creating a **separate stream** for less complex applications and any small **zoning by-law amendments** necessary; and as part of that report, to provide a **breakdown of applications** according to building type, size, complexity and nature of variance."*

Staff Report PH11.14 "Committee of Adjustment Applications Analyses and Service Improvements" has been written in response to this motion, as well as others.

20 Upjohn Rd, Suite 100
North York, ON M3B 2V9

Tel: 416.391.3445
Fax: 416.391.2118

www.gthba.ca

As a reminder, the *Planning Act* actually requires a hearing to be held 30 days after receipt of the minor variance application. Although the staff report (page 12) indicates that processing timelines of intake to hearing scheduling have moved from 12 weeks in 2017 to approximately 7 weeks now, clearly, neither the letter nor the spirit of this statutory requirement is currently being met. Given the admitted difficulty in meeting these statutory requirements, BILD would like to remain hopeful that the service improvements outlined in the staff report will yield tangible results, as the report summarizes recent enhancements to the CofA review and approvals process and evaluates other possible improvements. We value that staff are recognizing that there can be further improvements to these timelines, as collectively, we serve the City's biggest customer, the homeowner, in delivering much needed housing supply. We need to see results. Our members are here to be your partners in community building, and share the same desired outcome to have the best possible service improvements to the CofA process.

Therefore, we trust that staff will continue to be in regular communication with its' renovator members regarding the improvement initiatives outlined in staff report PH11.14, and utilize the expertise of our members to evaluate the degree of success of these potential improvements.

There are various elements outlined in staff report PH11.14 that BILD's renovator members are pleased to note, especially as it relates to Council having increased the size of CofA from 30 to 35 members, the establishment of an additional panel, and the hiring of three temporary senior planners and three assistant planners to focus on CofA applications.

We also appreciate that staff have acknowledged that application processing times across the different City districts vary, and that there needs to be a commitment to address this discrepancy as a way to improve service levels. As noted on page 8, ***"application volume is not evenly distributed between the four districts, resulting in different processing times per district. Staff are currently exploring options to better balance the application volumes across districts in order to provide more consistent processing timelines for applications."*** We look forward to learning about the options that staff are exploring, and **recommend that BILD's renovator members be a part of this ongoing discussion as way to test and examine potential solutions.**

Although staff are not recommending the creation of a separate stream for less complex applications at this time, BILD is pleased that staff have indicated that discussions on that front can continue. As noted on page 1 of the report, ***"staff were also asked to provide a breakdown of applications according to building type, size, complexity and the nature of the variances. This breakdown, which is included in the body of this report, will be used to formulate possible streaming options for minor variance applications and could be used for evaluating amendments to Zoning By-law 569-2013."*** Page 7 of the report indicates that ***"staff will continue to explore how best to divide applications into simple and complex streams. In formulating different options, staff involved in development review, residents groups, and applicants will be consulted."*** Page 8 also goes further to say that ***"another option for streaming different application types is to schedule them according to application type within the hearing itself. CofA***

staff currently try to group simple and more complex applications together to achieve efficient hearings and will continue to refine this process.”

BILD’s renovator members continue to hold the position that different application streams for CofA matters based on the size and complexity of proposals would enable less complex applications (such as renovations) to be processed more efficiently than larger, more complex and/or more contentious matters. We are therefore pleased to see that staff continue to be open to examining these possibilities, as indicated in the staff report, and we look forward to being a part of these solution-oriented discussions.

BILD does thank staff for indicating that they will continue to dialogue with applicants on service improvements and that they will continue to examine streaming options. However, at this time, as a way to ensure that all interested parties remain focused and committed to our mutual goals of success for CofA matters, ***BILD strongly recommends that staff be directed to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee within a year’s time with detailed progress, and key performance indicators illustrating tangible results related to the improvement initiatives and the streaming options as outlined in the December 10th PH11.4 staff report.***

BILD thanks staff for the open dialogue to date, and we look forward to ongoing discussion regarding these important service delivery related matters. We are happy to assist in any way to achieving our mutual goal of greater efficiencies at the Committee of Adjustment.

Sincerely,



Paula J. Tenuta, MCIP, RPP
Senior Vice President, Policy & Advocacy

CC: BILD Renovator Government Relations Committee Members