



**NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE**

Formerly St. Christopher House

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December 2, 2019

**Re: Toronto and East York Community Council TE 11.5 1141 Bloor Street West,
980 Dufferin Street, and 90 Croatia Street - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning
Amendment Application**

Dear City Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of West Neighbourhood House to express our support for the settlement reached between the Build a Better Bloor Dufferin group of residents, the developers of the Bloor Dufferin Lands, and the City.

While we are in favour of this settlement, there are a number of issues that were raised by the process, much of which we witnessed. Below are some reflections on the process followed by four recommendations for the future.

We send these reflections and recommendations in a spirit of collaboration and with the goal of contributing to improved process and better outcomes.

First, recognize the work and impact of local volunteer residents in city-building: West Neighbourhood House staff witnessed the hard work and commitment of the volunteer residents of Build a Better Bloor Dufferin over the past two plus years. The Build a Better Bloor group has a clear vision of an inclusive community that includes substantial affordable housing and community hub space for the public and local non-profits. The residents had nothing to gain personally from their involvement and, in fact, they sacrificed considerable personal time and energy for the benefit of our community.

I am sorry to report that sometimes the residents were not treated with the respect they deserved by City officials. At a minimum, they were often ignored and left in the dark.

Secondly: make use of the results of consultation processes – specifically the Community Hub: the City and provincial government paid for a consultation process with approximately 18 local non-profit service-providers regarding the Community Hub mandated for the Bloor Dufferin site. West Neighbourhood House staff were part of that Visioning Group, and like the other non-profits participating, we devoted considerable time and effort to consult with hundreds of local residents in multiple languages about their visions for the Community Hub. The Community Hub Vision fit well with the City's values and goals for good neighbourhoods.

588 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON Canada M6J 1E3
The Meeting Place
Newcomer Outreach Program

248 Ossington Avenue
Toronto, ON Canada M6J 3A2
Adult Literacy and
Learning Programs
Family and Newcomer
Programs
Music School
Older Adult Centre

1033 King Street West
Toronto, ON Canada M6K 3N3
Employment Services
Financial Empowerment
and Problem Solving
Adult Learning Programs

1497 Queen Street West
Unit #103, Toronto, ON
Canada M6R 1A3
Family and Newcomer
Programs
Parkdale Meeting Place



However, this extensive consultation work, the Vision Report, and the network of non-profits subsequently were not referenced nor leveraged well by the City.

Thirdly: the final deal, leveraged by the Build a Better Bloor Dufferin group, is far better than the City was able to obtain on its own. Clearly the City does not have the negotiating power and/or regulatory leverage to consistently ensure that substantial community benefits, such as affordable housing and affordable non-profit space, are part of the cost of the developers doing business.

The City could have used the leverage of the residents and of the Visioning Group earlier on to better negotiate with the developers.

While we look forward to the City quickly implementing inclusionary zoning as a new tool, it also will be important for residents of this City to understand the full impact of the new Bill 108 on development and community benefits.

Looking forward, we recommend that the City:

- 1. Revise the current public consultation processes that are leaving many residents frustrated with results after devoting their personal time to better their communities;*
- 2. Proactively support and strategize with local residents' groups and non-profits about development opportunities, especially when the residents and non-profits' values align with City goals (i.e. for more affordable housing etc);*
- 3. Invest in public education about the upcoming change of Bill 108; and*
- 4. Enlist concerned residents and non-profit community service-providers to be part of designing the implementation of Bill 108 locally.*

West Neighbourhood House appreciates this opportunity to express our support for the deal, share our reflections and offer ideas for improvement.

Sincerely,



Maureen Fair
Executive Director
West Neighbourhood House