

MM25.15 Empowering Toronto with a City Charter_City Council consideration on Oct 30 2020_Submission_Lenka Holubec

Oct 30, 2020

VIA E-MAIL: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

RE: MM25.15 Empowering Toronto with a City Charter_City Council consideration on Oct 30, 2020

Dear Mayor Tory and Council Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the motion by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor John Filion recommending that:

“Council request the Government of Canada to provide a mechanism for the City of Toronto and other municipal governments to establish a City Charter that provides authority over specific municipal issues including, but not limited to, the following: *local public health, municipal elections and governance, financial matters; and land use planning and construction matters.*”

Below text may express rather well tenet behind this motion:

“*First, it’s in the public interest that cities have clear control of their own affairs and predictable sources of money to pay for it. Cities know what’s best for cities; local decisions should be made by the people who have to live with them.*” In defense of Toronto becoming a charter city, Dec 19, 2019, Spacing Magazine, Toronto

Covid-19 heightened many disparities and injustice in our society as much as our still lacking action on climate and biodiversity crisis.

A lot was written and said since epidemic took over what used to be our “normal “ pondering into what should be changed and done as a way of learning from this monumental wake up call.

On Oct 27, City Council adopted with amendments item EX17.1 Report Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto.

The expressed motto in this Report: ***“Building back better means learning from the past and starting sustainable improvements that make a difference for future generations”*** is inspirational but it seems that Report falls short on leading to what many understand should be *Green and Just Recovery*.

We know now that for the city to be equitable it has work for most of people.

Also, the big cities have a big role to play in climate and biodiversity decline. Toronto was bestowed with some of the most diverse ecosystems which were mapped and designated as Environmentally Significant Areas to be protected for the long term and future generations.

Much more needs to be done to bring into reality what we've already learnt about the city and environment in the past:

"Since early 90th, there was a growing awareness in the City of Toronto of having to protect remaining valuable natural areas. Too often in the past, we have considered green space as an afterthought, what was left over after development took its course.

In the urban context, the planning priority is to ensure that we benefit from the natural heritage while not unduly impairing natural processes.

Too often in the past, we have considered green space as an afterthought, what was left over after development took its course"

Metropolitan Waterfront Plan, Metropolitan Planning Department, Feb 1994

Covid-19 is giving us an opportunity to review long time held beliefs.

Under Covid-19 lenses we can ponder into what stands for a true measure of a successful city.

We are at the a crossroads as a society and Toronto as a city, if it is to continue as a leader in making changes to achieve a truly more equitable society and to address intertwined climate and biodiversity crisis.

I recommend that:

The City Council adopts MM25.15 Empowering Toronto with a City Charter - motion by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor John Filion.

Empowering Toronto with a City Charter presents an opportunity to take on the many challenges with a fresh approach giving Toronto, its people and environment a chance for *"building back better"*.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

Lenka Holubec, member of ProtectNatureTO