

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Toronto City Council
12th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Attn: Marilyn Toft, Council Secretariat

Delivered by email to: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

Re: PH27.2 – Zoning Conformity for Official Plan Employment Areas – Phase 1 Final Report and Phase 2 Update

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Toronto City Council,

On behalf of Theatre Gargantua, I wish to express our concern and alarm with respect to the report on Zoning By-Law conformity for employment zones in the Official Plan, specifically the proposed removal of permissions for bingo halls and related uses in the Former City of Etobicoke Zoning By-law (Attachment 9 to the Final Report).

Our charity is one of 66 local charities that rely on Delta Bingo and Gaming St. Clair, to support our organization in the Toronto community. Without that support we will simply not be able to function.

For the past 30 years Theatre Gargantua has been committed to the creation of original, compelling, devised work. Exploring socially relevant themes through dynamic theatricality by expertly blending innovative technology, provocative text, acrobatic-like choreography, live vocal compositions, and media into a signature style has earned Theatre Gargantua a distinct place within Canada's theatre ecology. The company's artistic work has been recognized with dozens of awards, and nominations, receiving over 30 Dora Mavor Moore nominations and awards. Gargantua's artistic leadership have been honored with the prestigious and coveted Harold Award, George Luscombe Award for Mentorship, and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for contributions to Canadian culture.

Bingo Funding has been crucial to allowing Gargantua to continue to offer a robust community outreach program with award-winning mentorship opportunities available to artists at every stage of their career. Gargantua offers High School Matinee Series with workshops, Dynamic Creation Workshops, RISK Youth Program which combines technology and creativity in a workshop series for underserved high schools across the GTA, Emerging Artist Roundtable Series, and Artistic and Producing Mentorship program. For professional artists Gargantua offers Dynamic Creation Workshops, Masterclasses, and are consistent funders and presenters of new artist's work through the Ontario Arts Council Recommender Grants for Theatre Creators, and the company's SideStream programming, respectively.

Were Bingo funding to disappear Gargantua's sizable engagement with the community, dedication to advancing Canadian culture in a way that is unique to the Toronto arts community, and commitment to mentoring and training the next generation of Canadian Theatre Artist would be critically impacted.

The last 18 months have been very challenging for everyone, and our organization is no exception. We have struggled to survive with very little funding as Delta St. Clair was closed for 420 days over the course

of the pandemic. Now, due to a proposed expropriation from the City of Toronto and Metrolinx, the Delta St. Clair location will have to move to another site. The new site (at 360 Evans Ave.) is currently zoned to allow for a Bingo Hall. Under the proposed By-law amendment that permission would be revoked.

As you can appreciate, finding an appropriate venue at a reasonable price in the current real estate environment is a real challenge. We are looking forward to the move to 360 Evans Ave. and urge you not to remove this permission and allow Delta St. Clair to re-locate as planned with the current permissions.

Based on the concerns identified above, we respectfully request that the Draft By-laws and report, specifically as it applies to the use of employment lands for bingo halls, is removed entirely or in the very least referred back to City Planning staff for dedicated public consultation and review. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request, and we look forward to further discussions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alec Harmer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alec Harmer

General Manager
Theatre Gargantua