

June 18, 2021

Councillor James Pasternak
Chair, North York Community Council
North York Civic Centre
Main floor, 5100 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON
M2N 5V7



Sent electronically

Re: Motion MM34.30 Request for an update regarding the current status of hiring a new Director for Community Planning, North York District

Dear Members of the North York Community Council,

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) is writing in support of the motion by Councillor James Pasternak and Councillor Jaye Robinson that requests an update on the recruitment status for the new Director for Community Planning, North York District.

RESCON represents over 200 residential builders of high-rise, mid-rise and low-rise buildings in the province, with a specific focus on the GTA. Our goal is to work in cooperation with government and related stakeholders to offer realistic solutions to a variety of challenges facing the residential building industry, which in turn have wider societal impacts. The focus of RESCON's work is on technical standards; labour relations; industry research and innovation; health and safety; regulatory reforms; training and apprenticeship.

The number of delayed development applications continues to increase which limits the development industry's ability to meet housing demands in the City. The North York district holds the highest population of all six districts and continues to grow, and it is also recognized as the secondary economic hub of the City. It is imperative that all positions within the Community Planning Section be filled in a timely matter, specifically at the Director level.

The Director of Community Planning position has been vacant for 18 months and counting. The lack of a full-time permanent Director of Community Planning has a direct negative impact on Customer Service levels that the City has made a strategic priority to improve upon. Moreover, filling this vacant position in a timely matter aligns directly with the City's established priority to fill position openings related to [development](#), supports COVID-19 recovery, and the City's operating budget through increased fee and tax collection.

Through the Concept to Keys Initiatives (C2K), RESCON has been engaging with staff in the City Manager's office on how the City can speed up and improve the development approvals process. Further, the City is also a signatory to the [One Ontario](#) initiative that is proposing a common Development Approval Data and Information Exchange Standard, a Central Review Platform and Central Analytics and Reporting Platform to be used by municipalities, Provincial Ministries, Conservation Authorities and other approval agencies in Ontario to significantly streamline the development and permitting processes. Not having a Director of Community Planning is in direct contention of both of these efforts.

The City's good governance and stability relies on their ability to provide services to businesses and the people of Toronto, which is only possible if staffing vacancies are filled with the best candidates within an appropriate time frame.



Finally, the City of Toronto is currently facing a housing crisis – with demand far exceeding supply. Delayed meetings and approvals because of an unfilled Director position only make matters worse and results in further barriers to getting housing built in a timely fashion.

We appreciate the level of due diligence that both Councillor Pasternak and Councillor Robinson have shown. RESCON is officially requesting an update on the plan going forward to ensure that the Director position gets filled and a proposed timeline.

RESCON is looking forward to speaking on this issue at the upcoming North York Community Council meeting on June 23.

Regards,

Richard Lyall
President

Copy to:

Mayor John Tory

Daniela Magisano, Deputy Director, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor

Chris Murray, City Manager, City Manager's Office

Tracey Cook, Deputy City Manager, City Manager's Office

Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning

Councillor Jaye Robinson, Don Valley West

Councillor Ana Bailão, Davenport and Chair, Planning and Housing Committee

Councillor Mark Grimes, Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Chair, Etobicoke York Community Council

Rachel Van Fraassen, Chief of Staff to Councillor Jaye Robinson

Aytakin Mohammadi, Chief of Staff to Councillor James Pasternak

Carlie Turpin, Secretariat, North York Community Council