



November 24, 2021

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Nancy Martins

RE: PH29.14 – Committee of Adjustment – Status Update

Dear Deputy Mayor Ana Bailao, Chair and Members of Planning and Housing Committee

This is to express our interest in the information provided in the above noted report, and to remind staff of the reasons why the review was initiated.

This report provides an update to Planning and Housing Committee, and City Council direction, further to a City Planning report titled Update on Committee of Adjustment Virtual Public Hearings, dated April 6, 2021. An independent consultant is being retained to review the End-to-End Review of the Development Review Process Final Report, dated August 15, 2019, as it applies to the Committee of Adjustment, as well as additional matters associated with virtual Committee of Adjustment public hearings.

Staff have had discussion with the consultant retained for the End-to-End Review and have scoped-out a proposed work program that responds to the required areas of review, with the expectation that, when retained, the consultant can complete the work by the end of Q1 of 2022 and staff will be in a position to report soon after.

The report describes interim improvements that have been made in the areas of: Public Notice Signage, Documents/Application Checklist Form / Webpage Updates, Virtual Public Meetings - Technology related Improvements, Access to Open Data, and Integrated Business Management System (IBMS).

We would remind City Planning that the report back was requested due to concerns expressed by many residents over multiple issues, such as the rubber-stamping of applications, procedural unfairness to residents in the hearings process, the lack of appreciation of Committee of Adjustment Panel members for the Four Tests, etc. These concerns were a key driver behind the Council direction for a review of the Committee of Adjustment.

Despite this, the report does not speak to the community engagement that will be undertaken and we would request that City Planning communicate this key expectation to the consultant.

Yours truly,

Geoff Kettel
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Cathie Macdonald
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Attachment: FoNTRA letter re PH22.7 Update on Committee of Adjustment Virtual Public Hearings

Cc: Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Kyle Knoeck, Acting Director, Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, City Planning Division,
Diane Silver, Acting Project Coordinator, Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, City Planning Division

Attachment



April 21, 2021

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Nancy Martins
Email: phc@toronto.ca

RE: PH22.7 Update on Committee of Adjustment Virtual Public Hearings

Dear Chair Ana Bailão and Members of Planning and Housing Committee,

The Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member associations in Midtown, North Toronto, and North York. FoNTRA has been active in bringing forward the concerns of residents across the area about the Committee of Adjustment, and interrelated processes in residential infill, such as neighbourhood planning guidelines, zoning review, TLAB appeals, and construction issues.

The Report responds to City Council direction and requests related to the COVID related measures taken by City Planning in the past year, which focus on four operational matters: application volume; staffing and panel member capacity; public notification improvements; and participation at virtual public hearings. The Report's basic message is all about efficiency in handling volume, not about making decisions that are fair, that are based on input from neighbours, and that respect and maintain neighbourhood character.

The Report does not address the underlying issues with the Committee of Adjustment that residents have been continually raising for years. The measures taken, while intended to maintain "customer service" for applicants, do nothing to address quality and procedural issues, which judging from some data appear to be getting worse. Residents have an active interest in good planning of our City, one which ensures that the process is open, transparent and fair, and accessible to become engaged and participate at all stages.

We recommend that the Committee request City Council to:

- Direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Chief Building Official to conduct a public review of the Committee of Adjustment including establishment of an advisory committee, and public engagement and to include the following:
 - Investigate and address residents' concerns with the current processes;
 - Consider alternatives to the Committee of Adjustment process for minor variances and severances
 - Review and revise the Committee of Adjustment processes based on tribunal best practices, and quality assurance review practices
 - Education and training of Members (both procedures and substance of the Committee mandate).

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Kettel
Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Co-Chair, FoNTRA

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Cc: Mayor John Tory,
Councillor Jaye Robinson,
Tracey Cook, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure and Development Services
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Will Johnston, Chief Building Official
Michael Mizzi, Director, Zoning and Committee of Adjustment

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.