

Thank you for arranging the open house on TO/governance at the Olympium yesterday evening. Richard Whates was helpful and attentive to my oral comments to the point of making notes. Here are my initial comments on your constructive project.

"Toronto in the 70s was the city that worked. Now Toronto is the city that does not work, thus impairing its long term livability.

Local democracy has sunk to an all-time low to the extent that lobbying by well-resourced groups has more power influence than local people.

In fact, because China operates by frameworks, letting the lower level of government decide what is local, China probably has more local democracy than Toronto!

The most effective group I have come across is TLAB who have shown understanding of how people, in accordance with the Official Plan, should be shaping their neighbourhoods. TLAB is efficient and responsive, something that generally cannot be applied to most other city departments. This is because politicians and staff are too few. The Mayor's office is a fortress where it seems impossible to get a response about anything.

The least effective and most damaging Committee is the Etobicoke York Committee of Adjustment which is unaccountable, contemptuous of the public, impervious to logic and observes none of the planning and legal framework which governs their decision making (see attached). They also act unlawfully according to a Divisional Court expert because they do not provide reasons. That means none of any of the committee decisions made in Toronto would stand up in court. According to the expert this is unique in Ontario. Consequently the City's Official Plan and elected representatives are being severely undermined.

We now have a Province that is imposing undemocratic reforms without consultation (see attached). This sort of action which can be seen most commonly in transit eg cancellation of Eglinton Subway, Cancellation of LRT (most of which should have been open by now) are creating strong negative impacts on the future livability of the City. All ideas and proposals should be brought in by extensive and effective public engagement process. That way development and community services can be in sync.

There seems to be a massive misunderstanding by staff as to who their client is. It is not an applicant who is supposed to follow policy but in actuality is creating policy. Developers are essential but are the implementers rather than the creators of policy which tends to happen at the moment. The huge inequality between the development industry and regular people who are affected is the determining factor.

Consequently we need to have grassroots engagement for every topic as was done in Hamilton during my 25 years of employment there. Engagement specialists are needed. Advisory Committees were set up for each topic from Neighbourhood Plans to city wide housing policy. A number of meetings would be held to educate the group, identify issues, analysis done and recommendations made in the public interest. Usually there was unanimity among committee and staff which may seem surprising. A councillor is needed as a resource on each of these committees. To ensure City Council is not overloaded there needs to be in some form of Community Government so that decisions can be made as near to those affected as possible. This used to happen in Lakeshore where Etobicoke was a political entity but units need to be considerable smaller such as the old Ward 6 which has cultural connections.

An informal arrangement where the councillor would bring all proposals both public and private for input to a representative group. In the case of development proposals mostly before the application was made. Community led engagement was used for the higher density 17,000 population Lakeview Waterfront project in Mississauga. These meetings were inspirational because the electorate led by former councilor Jim Tovey and now councillor Steven Dashko took full account of the communities view. This project has already won a prize from BILD but it is the method of preparation which is the key to success. In contrast most of the community meetings in Toronto are fractious and vitriolic and rarely end up being what the community would like to see because the development industry has so much power."

These are my initial comments and wish to be notified of further meetings and progress.

Yours truly, David Godley, 401 Lake Promenade, Toronto, M8W 1C3