

From: Mark Newton

Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 3:21 PM

To: Clerks Public; Gold, Laura

Subject: Development Services Committee Meeting February 11, 2025

Dear Laura,

Re: DEPUTATION REGARDING ITEM # 8.1 – RECOMMENDATION REPORT, NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'Í OF CANADA, OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS TO PERMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW BAHÁ'Í NATIONAL CENTRE AND CANADIAN NATIONAL TEMPLE AT 7200 AND 7290 LESLIE STREET (WARD 1), FILE PLAN 22 262723

This deputation is in response to the above-captioned Recommendation Report.

In my view the Official Plan Amendment application and the Zoning By-law Amendment application should not be approved by the Development Services Committee or by City Council without significant modifications. The Recommendation Report should be referred back to City staff.

1. **Lodging facility.** The lodging facility should not be approved. It is not consistent with current or proposed Zoning By-laws. A lodging facility is not appropriate for this property, which is adjacent to a residential neighbourhood.

The Bahai purchased #4 Waterloo Court last year and have apparently already been using that property as a lodging facility, according to the numbers of people who have been seen staying there intermittently. An additional new lodging facility on the north side of the street should not be approved.

The Recommendation Report does not provide any analysis or specific recommendations regarding the lodging facility. I am requesting City staff to provide its analysis and specific recommendation regarding the lodging facility, and regarding the very large number of rooms.

The set-back should be at least 15 metres, in accordance with the minimum standards in the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. A lesser set-back would be grossly insufficient for a commercial building, especially for a lodging facility. A lesser set-back also could not possibly provide space for sufficient buffering for the residents of Waterloo Court.

2. **Greenway.** The Greenway is protected land. No part of the Greenway should be redesignated as Residential Low Rise. The Bahai properties are of sufficient size and configuration without the need to diminish the Greenway. The Official Plan is in place to protect the Greenway. The City should not approve the redesignation of any part of the Greenway to Residential Low Rise.
3. **Arterial road.** The Recommendation Report noted that Leslie Street north of Steeles Avenue is not an arterial road. Yet, without any substantiation, the Report states that the Bahai properties can accommodate the proposed development. How did City staff arrive at this conclusion? I request City staff to provide an analysis, with numerical support.

The current use of the Bahai properties, namely, a national administration centre, is accommodated on Leslie Street. The proposed development massively increases the size, scale and footprint, with a larger administration building, a large temple, lodging facilities, two welcome centres and above and below-ground parking lots.

As noted in the Recommendation Report, policy 8.13.7 of the Official Plan specifies that places of worship and associated buildings be located at the intersection of an arterial road and another public road. However, the proposed development is unlike other places of worship, given the size and complexity, including a national administration centre and a large lodging facility.

There will be only one vehicular access for the proposed facilities, namely, the Leslie Street cul-de-sac. Not only is this section of Leslie Street not an arterial road, it is also not a through road. There will be no access to the proposed facilities other than Leslie Street. This poses a potential safety risk. The City should not approve the use of a cul-de-sac for a development of this size.

4. **Temple height.** The height of the temple should be no more than the average height of homes on Waterloo Court and in the Bayview Fairways communities. The current proposed height of 25 metres, or 82 feet, is inappropriate and should not be permitted. Under Zoning By-law 1767, the height of the temple would be limited to 7.6 metres, or 25 feet. The proposed height is over three times that which is permitted under the Zoning By-law.

The Recommendation Report states that the temple height would be generally in line with surrounding vegetation. Firstly, the Zoning By-laws do not reference a criterion that buildings be in line with surrounding vegetation. Secondly, once the

trees are removed at the height of land where the temple is proposed to be situated, the temple will not even be in line with surrounding vegetation, much less in line with the height of residential homes in the neighbourhood.

5. **Community concerns.** From the results of the community survey and from the many depositions to date, it is apparent that the residents and ratepayers in the surrounding residential neighbourhoods are overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed development, for various reasons, many of which were most recently outlined in the letter from three ratepayer associations, dated June 5, 2025 addressed to Mr. Cefaratti and copied to the Mayor and City Council.

While some of these concerns have been answered in the Recommendation Report, many important concerns were not addressed. Public opinion should be given more weight in the City's recommendations. The ratepayer associations requested City staff to provide its analysis of their main concerns. It also requested a meeting with City staff. Neither has been provided to date.

I request the DSC to refer the Recommendation Report back to City staff in order that the size, scale and footprint of the proposed project can be reduced to a size that is more in keeping with the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws.

Respectfully,

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