

(1)

Hau, Lucy

Subject: FW: OMB reform

From: Armstrong, Nirmala
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2016 11:14 AM
To:
Cc: Mayor & Councillors; Kitteringham, Kimberley; Baird, Jim
Subject: Re: OMB reform

Thank you very much for your email.

Nirmala Armstrong
Regional Councillor
City of Markham
Anthony Roman Centre
101 Town Centre Boulevard,
Markham. Ontario L3R 9W3
T: 905-415-7534 M: 416-509-2037 F: 905-479-7763

On Feb 21, 2016, at 10:20 AM, wrote:

Hello Mr. Mayor and Members of Council,

RE: Jurisdiction of the Ontario Municipal Board

We are writing in support of the motion tabled by Councillor Karen Rea with respect to the powers of the Ontario Municipal Board. We ask that Markham Council pass this motion, unanimously, so that the municipalities of Ontario can, working together, take back the planning powers that rightly belong to the elected representatives of the people.

For too many years the OMB has had the power, and the obvious willingness, to thwart the Official Plans created by the City of Markham and every other municipality in this Province. This situation gives inordinate power to wealthy developers and reduces the power of the residents, every member of Markham Council, and the planning department of the City.

The people elect you to plan the future of our City in the best interests of everyone, not just for the benefit of individual developers. These developers should be required to abide by the decisions that you make, in consultation with residents and staff, as contained in the Official Plan. This creates the necessary link, in a democracy, of accountability between the voters and their elected representatives.

In the current system there is little accountability for planning as we do not elect the OMB. If a developer does not like the Official Plan and the decision of the planning department and Markham Council, it simply appeals to the OMB and is usually successful. Many residents and residents associations have experienced the

unfortunate results of this system over the years and have objected in any manner available to them, including being a party or participant in OMB hearings. They have witnessed first hand the total lack of respect paid to municipal planning decisions by this administrative tribunal that answers to no one.

Our group supports Councillor Rea's motion and encourages each of you to do the same. Ontario is the only Province in Canada that has a body like the OMB, with such extensive powers over municipal planning, and it is time for its powers to be severely restricted. Why should the City Councils of Vancouver, Calgary, and Halifax be in control of planning in those cities but you are not in control of planning for Markham?

Tell Premier Wynne that you are ready and willing to accept the responsibility that you were elected to do, plan the future of our City without undue interference from individual developers and the Ontario Municipal Board.

Thank you for your consideration of our position,

Marilyn Ginsburg,
for the Markham Citizens Coalition for Responsive Government (MCCRG)