

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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JUN 13 2013

13-60223

Mr. Archie Campbell
President
Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario
33 Rochester Street, Suite 6
Ottawa ON K1R 7L4

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Thank you for your letter of May 16, 2013, in which you provided me with the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods' recommendations regarding the Ontario Municipal Board. I also note the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods' support of the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association's recommendations regarding the planning system.

I appreciate that the recommendations in your letter are based on the collective experience of a number of residents' associations. I also note that the recommendations, along with those from the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association, cover a range of matters from how planning matters are dealt with before an appeal is made, to funding issues and the Board process.

Our government shares your desire to have a planning and appeal system that works as effectively as possible. This is one of the reasons why the government made changes to the land use planning system as part of the Planning Reform Initiative.

I note that a few of the recommendations in your letter relate to matters that were subject to previous reforms. In 2007, reforms were made affecting the Ontario Municipal Board which, among other changes, made the planning-appeal process more accessible to the public and placed greater emphasis on local decision-making. The reforms included requiring that the Board "shall have regard to" planning decisions made by a municipal council and information that council considered in making its decision. In addition, the reform included increasing transparency in the appeal system by providing the Board with the ability to dismiss appeals of applications that are substantially different from those considered by council.

In addition, the reforms also provided municipalities with the new authority to establish their own local appeal bodies for appeals regarding decisions on applications for minor variances and consents to sever land. If established, the local appeal bodies would hear most of those types of appeals instead of the Ontario Municipal Board.

The City of Toronto is currently examining the possibility of establishing such a body. A municipality establishing this type of body would be able to establish procedures to select its own members of a local appeal body from the community, and to establish rules and procedures for it. While no municipality has established a local appeal body to date, this ministry continues to support and encourage municipalities to establish such bodies.

While there are no immediate legislative plans for changes to the planning system, we are always open to suggestions about ways to improve planning in Ontario. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - together with municipalities, our stakeholders and other relevant ministries - periodically discuss ways to improve the planning system. Due to the contentious nature of the issues that come before the Board, developing a general consensus on the most appropriate overall structure that is as responsive as possible to the needs of Ontarians and Ontario communities is an ongoing initiative.

Since your recommendations also contemplated administrative changes to the Ontario Municipal Board as well as other matters, I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of your recommendations to my colleague - the Honourable John Gerretsen, Attorney General, for his consideration. The Ministry of the Attorney General holds administrative responsibility for the Ontario Municipal Board.

Once again, thank you for providing me with your recommendations. I will take the time to review them with great care and consideration. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Jeffrey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Jeffrey
Minister

c. Honourable John Gerretsen
Attorney General