

The letter below was delivered to the Councillors on the North York Community Council and Mayor Ford.

October 5, 2011

Dear Councillor,

Yesterday (October 4/11), on behalf of my community association, ARECA, I presented at the North York Community Council (NYCC) meeting.

The matter before you was a proposed 48 storey building at Eglinton and Duplex (Premium Properties 36-44 Duplex). It's in the YE Growth Centre, an area intended for very large buildings, right in the heart of the city and over the largest transit infrastructure spend ever seen in Canada. Just the kind of place you can locate a lot of people.

My beef was that very little time and resources are being dedicated to devising an overall plan for the area, in spite of so many development proposals coming forth.

In August 2010, Councillor Karen Stintz vowed to correct the situation. She bemoaned the fact that the area had no height and density limitations, but she promised "to fix all that". At the time she was defending her support for a 20 storey building beside a stable residential neighbourhood (Neon). A huge building that thrust right into the surrounding neighbourhoods. That was a building on which she should have been supporting the community's condemnation but instead she ignored many good planning reasons to reject and voted in favour of the big property owner. (There were no height and density restrictions in place, you see.)

Councillor Karen Stintz hasn't fixed anything yet. Planning in the North District is still broken. Productivity is almost non-existent. The planners yesterday used arguments they ignored when they approved of the NEON building. Why? Well, that's a question even a councillor can't answer. Councillors make poor planners and some of our City planners should drop any claim to professionalism. We still don't know when or why a building is too big or too tall. We don't understand how a big, tall building is allowed in an area the Official Plan says it doesn't belong, and we don't understand why a big, tall building is disallowed in an area intended for intensification.

However, you all took your lead from Councillor Karen Stintz. Which is just plain wrong, given that she isn't much of a planner herself. During 2010, the NYCC followed Councillor Karen Stintz twice (at least) as she requested the City to go to the OMB on the issue of a lot being sub-divided. Once after the Committee of Adjustment had APPROVED a sub-division and once after the Committee of Adjustment had DISAPPROVED of a sub-division. In both cases the City lost. Each OMB Hearing was a 2 day event and the City had to pay for outside experts on the one where we were challenging our own staff. In the first 5 months of 2011, Councillor Karen Stintz has spent almost 50% of her Office Budget on outside planning experts. Does any of this make sense to you when we are already paying for full time planning staff? It doesn't from where I'm sitting right now behind my desk as I earn an income, part of which pays for all of this.

Yesterday, I was asked what I would suggest NYCC should do. It was a laughable question. I'm not the first person who has deputed in front of you and asked for some integrity and consistency in how the NYCC makes planning decisions. You've heard it many times, in many different ways. In turn, I've heard the NYCC say many times, "We don't want the OMB making planning decisions for Toronto", like the time when the NYCC approved the NEON building. Yet,

yesterday you all voted to "see them in Court". Given that your planners are very exposed on a number of decisions made in the recent past, I'd say your boys will get hammered, again.

However, I don't believe it will go that far. Councillor Karen Stintz is only playing politics. It certainly wasn't good planning, or fiscal responsibility. We know that now for sure. No, what was signalled yesterday was negotiation, and if that is done without community input, it wouldn't be the first time that has happened either. What is also trying to be swept under the carpet here is any pressure to update the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan. It is also obvious that no heed should be paid to the local community association that has represented the area for over 22 years. Nobody wanted to discuss our suggestion that all development applications for the YE Growth Centre should be held over until such time as we have a MIDTOWN PLAN and a revised Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan.

The vote was called "OK, let's vote on the MOTION FROM THE LOCAL COUNCILLOR." One abstained and the rest all fell in line with the culture of Ward Politics. It doesn't matter the inconsistencies or the good ideas presented by the community, if the local councillor wants something, right or wrong, they get it. More and more, Torontonians are wondering, what is the point of a Community Council or Council if it all comes down to who has the ear of THE LOCAL COUNCILLOR.

And, to think, so many believe we have a well functioning local democracy.

Yours truly,

Director
ARECA