

ARTICLE - MIDTOWN CRIER – Councillor Michael Walker – May 2007

First of all, as I've stated before, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) needs to be abolished for Toronto. Over the past several years, I have been working with residents' groups in St. Paul's and the surrounding areas through the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FoNTRA) to reform the OMB. The provincial government assured the residents of Toronto that their amendments to the Planning Act (Bill 51) would alleviate the dominance of the OMB over City Planning in Toronto – this has not been the case. In the last 6 months, the OMB has made some of its most harmful decisions in terms of compromising the integrity of the City's Official Plan. Large developments in neighbourhoods are being approved against City Council's position. Appeals to the OMB have not been reduced. The looming shadow of the OMB needs to be removed from Toronto and final planning decisions need to rest with elected officials at City Hall.

The fact that city planners are, in my opinion, planning in the shadow of the OMB has become obvious in their verbal and written submissions to the public; appeal to the OMB is now considered by city planners when the development application is made to the City, thereby compromising our principles and the City's ability to say "no", leading the planners to settle on a development scheme so the City will not be required to fight the developer at the OMB, wasting time and money we don't have (in the planner's opinion), because the OMB is inclined to approve aggressive projects for overdevelopment. The future of the OMB has to be made an election issue in the coming Provincial election because the integrity and security of our neighbourhoods is threatened by the continued existence of the OMB.

The new City of Toronto Act continues to affect our quality of life in St. Paul's as well. On **Wednesday, June 6, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. at Christ Church Deer Park**, I will be holding a wardwide public meeting to discuss the new City of Toronto Act and the availability of new taxing powers for the City. Potential new revenue tools include: land transfer tax, vehicle registration tax, alcohol tax, tobacco tax, billboard tax, parking tax, entertainment tax, road-use tax. Mr. Joseph Pennachetti, Chief Financial Officer for the City, will be in attendance as well as City of Toronto Staff to make a presentation and answer your questions. I have real reservations with many of these suggested new taxes and as always, I look forward to hearing what you and your neighbours have to say.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-392-7906, [councillor\\_walker@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_walker@toronto.ca) or [www.michaelwalker.ca](http://www.michaelwalker.ca).