

June 22, 2001

TO: Chair and Members - Planning and Transportation Committee

FROM: Councillor Michael Walker

RE: Abbeyfield Homes of Toronto

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Planning and Transportation Committee request the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to amend the Zoning By-laws of the former municipalities to allow as-of-right the establishment of Abbeyfield houses in all zoned areas of the City of Toronto subject to the appropriate qualifications as determined by the Commissioner, and
- 2) That other not-for-profit organizations that are involved in providing seniors' housing be invited to participate in this process, and if acceptable to the Commissioner of Urban Development Services, be included in the amendment to the Zoning By-law, and
- 3) That the report be tabled at the next meeting of Planning and Transportation and be scheduled as a public deputation item.

Background:

I attach for your information a package on Abbeyfield Houses Society of Canada, a non-profit, non-secular organization that operates housing for seniors. They contacted me for their assistance in acquiring and operating homes in St. Paul's and other Toronto wards. There is a very successful Abbeyfield House in Scarborough and the organization wishes to create more opportunities for senior's housing in other areas of our City.

Abbeyfield Houses was started in Britain and has become popular around the world including British Columbia, Canada. They are homes with 8-10 seniors and a care worker in a residential setting. It provides a wonderful opportunity for seniors to live communally in their own neighbourhood. I would note that given the current condition and scarcity of seniors housing in Toronto, Abbeyfield Houses Society of Canada provides an excellent opportunity for City Council to help address that problem. And more appropriately I might add than in luxury condominium skyscraper developments.

In many cases and in most R districts, the current Zoning By-laws require a Committee of Adjustment hearing due to the use of the property. Due to the “hot” nature of the Toronto housing market, Abbeyfield Houses has had difficulty in acquiring properties in the core with imposing “a condition” on the sale. The Committee of Adjustment process takes time and can cause opposition from neighbours towards this most appropriate use of a large house. An Ontario Municipal Board appeal can add additional costs to the not-for-profit sector.

The attached information package provides a great amount of detail about the concept of Abbeyfield Houses. Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, The Honorable Hilary Weston is Abbeyfield Canada’s National Patron and heartily endorses its’ efforts.

Also attached is a copy of the appropriate section of the former City of Toronto’s Zoning By-law that could be amended easily to provide for Abbeyfield Houses of Toronto. Alternately, Abbeyfield Houses of Toronto could be added as a definition in the zoning By-law and permitted as-of-right in all neighbourhoods.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Walker
Councillor – St. Paul’s

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