



June 10, 2026

Planning and Housing Committee of City Council City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

RE: PH 31.11 Continuous Improvement COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT - June 11, 2026 Meeting

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Cliffcrest Scarborough Village SW Residents Association (CSVSWRA) is an incorporated not-for-profit organization that works to preserve the character, safety, and livability of our neighbourhoods.

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the recent organizational re-alignment of the Committee of Adjustment (CoA) from City Planning to the Development Review division, and the subsequent directives requested by the mayor to streamline its decision-making processes.

While the goal of accelerating housing delivery is critical, the proposed changes risk compromising the quasi-judicial independence of the Committee, suppressing the community's voice, and creating an institutional conflict of interest. Any policy realignment is a failure if it prioritizes applicant/investor profitability over the desperate need for affordable local housing. CSVSWRA urges the Committee to carefully consider the following negative implications before finalizing the Q2 2026 work-plan:

- **Compromised Quasi-Judicial Independence:** Shifting oversight to the Development Review division—a branch we understand to be heavily focused on development volume and speeds—creates an institutional conflict. Forcing staff reports to explicitly state alignment with Council housing policies places undue political pressure on supposed independent panel members to "rubber stamp" applications rather than evaluating them strictly on the four tests of the Planning Act.
- **Erosion of Public Consultation and Community Voice:** Directives that focus heavily on 'improving timelines' and 'streamlining decision-making' for applicants can have the unintended result of truncating hearing times and reducing opportunities for public

deputations. Neighbors and community associations may find themselves sidelined, losing their ability to flag localized impacts such as massing, shadowing and overspill parking. The Official Plan allows some degree of certainty for all City of Toronto residents who value their neighbourhoods. Overriding democracy to improve timelines and streamline decision-making is not a desirable outcome.

- **Risk of "Mission Creep" for Minor Variances:** The CoA is designed to handle minor, localized variances. Attempting to force larger, more complex residential projects through an expedited CoA process to bypass the standard zoning amendment track undermines the integrity of the City's Official Plan.
- **Politicization of Panel Recruitment:** The push to attract new panel members must include those who have more than a transitory stake in the neighbourhood as well as be merit-based. There is a valid community concern that changing the recruitment criteria to prioritize speed and housing output could lead to panels stacked with pro-development insiders, destroying public trust in the Committee's neutrality.
- **Overriding Environmental Protections:** Harmonizing minor variance applications with tree injury or removal permits must not mean weakening Toronto's vital tree canopy protections. Rushing these decisions to avoid "conflicting outcomes" risks prioritizing minor design conveniences over critical environmental bylaws.

Accelerating housing must not come at the expense of democratic oversight, due process, and balanced neighborhood planning. We strongly request that the Development Review division be directed to include robust protections for the Committee's independent tribunal status with explicit requirements to follow 'the rules of natural justice' by safeguarding the democratic right for public consultation within their upcoming findings.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Peter Thachuk, Director
Cliffcrest Scarborough Village S/W Residents Association

cc: Councillor Paul Ainslie
cc: Councillor Parthi Kandavel
cc. Mayor Olivia Chow