

Federation of
Citizens'
Associations of
Ottawa-Carleton

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Fédération des
associations
civiques d'Ottawa-
Carleton

June 9, 2015

Mayor Jim Watson,
City of Ottawa

Dear Mayor Watson, Ottawa City Councillors and City Planning Department,

Our Federation of Citizens' Association (FCA) members and Community Associations were concerned at the notion of "Ambassadors for Developers" as reported in the Ottawa Citizen last week.

Upon further investigation, we note that much of this message "Ambassadors for Developers" came from an internal memo entitled: "Development Review Pilot Program", Planning and Growth Management, dated June 4, 2015 and that the intention of the Client Relationship Leader Pilot Program is to "improve the efficiency and focus of operations".

As volunteers in this City of Ottawa and in our communities, our FCA members have donated literally thousands of hours to bring a community perspective to our growing city through Official Plan consultation during the past 4 years, Infill 1 and Infill 2 participation, building relationships with City Planning and Growth Management and the Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association (GOHBA).

FCA supports PGM in their efforts to improve the efficiency of operations. However, communities matter! Community Associations and Citizen Groups must be included in decision with the goal of improving relations with City Planners and Developers. Community groups should have advocates in the process to provide balance to the voice of developers in the community. A collaborative approach is badly needed to support strong and well developed communities in Ottawa. As clients, we have invested much in our communities. Too often, developers and planners have had the upper hand in decision making without engaging the resident and client.

Why not consider "Ambassadors for Communities", an opportunity to engage the public? This concept would provide PGM with an opportunity to support "Community Based Planning" (CBP), ie. district and Ward based planning, a practice that is badly needed by us all. Why is this needed? Community based planning supports communities by engaging residents locally, planners get to know and understand the character and needs of the district area and developers can make their pitch for their planned investment. Other cities have successfully implemented CBP for all planning. Managing development issues in our neighbourhoods is challenging and it is time to consider CBP along with best practices for positive change.

Our FCA promotes community engagement and looks forward to working with Planning and Growth Management, City Council and the Industry. We trust that you will seriously consider our request as we move forward with the proposed 2015-2018 Term of Council Priorities, which cites Healthy and Caring Communities as an important goal.

Yours truly,

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cc. M. Mizzi, PGM