

Engaged Citizens of Burlington (ECoB) is a not for profit group working towards a better Burlington for generations to come. Working within the civic process, we are particularly concerned with issues of planning and development. The group is energized to bring voices and action to challenges that will affect the quality of life today and in the future, we are advocates for good planning across the entire City. In the months from inception, ECoB has held an open meeting, a rally, a municipal elections workshop, hand delivered thousands of flyers, displayed hundreds of lawn signs, received press, appeared on community television and radio, grown our social media base, inspired a record number of delegations, met with provincial and municipal elected officials, city planning, business owners, developers and most importantly residents.

We have reflected on our position on the matters contained in the Draft Official Plan and truly reflect to objectively determine if we are the outliers, to see if we were the radicals, to see if there was any truth to the tactics used to silence us. And here's the thing, we are not. What we are – are concerned residents and now we are engaged.

From fragmented pockets across the city have woven together to tell the same story – we are not against growth – we are against excessive intensification and loss of community. The same Provincial Policy Statements are used in every development justification report and the same committee and council allow the most obtuse interpretation of these guidelines to promote efficient land use and development patterns. The same policies that govern Toronto and Mississauga have only one safety net in place and that is our Municipal Official Plan. That is why today is so important.

In previous delegations, residents and ECoB have set out specific areas for reconsideration. We asked to have the bar set higher – in the spirit of vibrancy to increase the uses in the Brant Main Precinct, we were successful in receiving a “should” contain three uses in the three storey podiums that extinguish our unique downtown retail. We talked about employment land designations and the ability to keep the door open for

future considerations, we saw uproar that ensued from our agricultural friends.

We know you are aware there is a deficiency here and that is why the City has actively taken steps to ignore and deduce the consistent wave of pushing into this process.

The number of drafts that have come out, the inability to build a model that neighbourhood kids could complete, the inadvertent scheduling conflicts, the refusal to meet by some Councillors, the letter from the City Manager to silence instead of collaborate, thrown out petitions, NIMBY lawn signs in every ward, minutes of grow bold videos that hardly scratch the surface #growbold, #goodplanningmatters, and the most stinging “just because you don’t like it doesn’t mean it isn’t good planning”.

Right down to the special meeting of Council scheduled directly after this Committee meeting – how is anything from the 30+ delegations today going to receive due process and influence the vote tomorrow?

And aren’t quite done. There is still the Transit Plan, the Transportation Plan, the Mobility Hub Plan, the secondary phase of the Downtown Area Specific Plan. The challenges are still ahead and if we cannot all be on the same page with the most important City document, we most certainly will be challenged in the phases that shape our future.

Here’s the thing, planning is suggestive and without doubt a challenging task and profession. While we know that we’ve been a pain we also want you to know that we do respect the work that has been done and hope that if anything, this pressure will give you more support to create a plan that is built exclusively for our great city.

We need to call a truce.

We are not against growth, we are not against change. But we are against it done poorly, done in a way that contravenes protection of established neighbourhoods, a way that cannot audit the 5% growth, cannot protect **our** own green space, and in a way that will ebb and flow as supporting

plans come forward. We have asked for a complete vision and are no where close.

We are asking for help because it is not ok to extend permissions for 18+ stories abutting low density residential, it is not ok to allow incongruent infill, it is not ok to allow hundreds of townhomes that double the density permissions, it is not ok to push residents in Alton village, Pinedale, Bluewater/ Avondale, Dynes, Aldershot and more to the very edge - where the only option is seeking relief from the municipal tribunal. It is not ok to leave every resident wondering when they are going to have to become experts in the planning process that they have entrusted to those before us. Let's make sure that the balance is in our favour now.

The province has mandated growth, we recognize that there needs to be growth, but is it councils responsibility to protect community. The question is does any of this document actually enforce a successful and complete community. We need the Committee to insist that amenities are included not just residential. It is about quality of life and not quantity of people. We seem to be more focused on getting people out of the city instead of keeping people in the city - embedded into their communities through a live, work and play approach.

We have tried everything possible to bring a sense of balance, to bring a better vision, to bring a complete plan and we are exhausted. We have asked, does the city want to fight with the residents or against the residents, only you can decide with the vote today. And so, with the last chance to address this Draft Official Plan today we ask you to let down your guard, let us in, and really hear your residents. We continually hear Staff ask – “is this plan defensible”, and yet the bigger question is “is this plan accountable?”. This is the last chance to be accountable to residents today and residents in the future.