

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING - Proposed Revised Sign By-law and Amendments to Current Sign and Canopy By-law
- Steve Wallowich, Senior Director of Real Estate, Ontario, OutFront Media – advising that they are one of the largest outdoor media companies in Canada; noting that they have signs in every major market, they have a number of signs in the City of London, including signs on City-owned land; stating that staff has done an excellent job with the revisions or the proposed changes to the Sign By-law but he would like to ask for the Committee's consideration in one small alteration; being to the overall permitted display area specific to signs with digital method of display; indicating that the current recommendation is to allow for signs that are thirty square metres in overall display area; asking if the Committee could accept a modification, literally two and a half, three square metres larger; the reason being is that the Industry tries really hard to make it easy to buy their media and they try to make it convenient and accessible; as a result of that, they try to form standardized sizes that they sell, they form digital networks that they can offer and consistency in size greatly affects the salability of the media product; unfortunately thirty square metres just misses what is becoming a standardized size, being ten feet by thirty-five feet; it is a size that is proportionately the same as a product which they call a bulletin display, which is a large display; because of the economics of operating digital signs, they are very expensive to build and they would only propose to build a limited number of these types of signs, they need to charge a lot of money to their clients to make this economically viable and, as a result of that, the trending in the Industry is that the larger the better; a small modification would mean that sign companies, such as themselves, would not need to seek variances for a minor alteration in the display area; if they could just simply adjust that calculation to capture that new standardized sign display area that would greatly benefit them as a key stakeholder in the Industry.
 - Jen Pastorius, Old East Village Business Improvement Area – see attached presentation.
 - Nicholas, Leasing Representative, Pattison Outdoor Advertising – expressing appreciation to the staff for the continued support and cooperation with Pattison Outdoor in the sign industry; noting that it seems to be a rare thing nowadays and we certainly appreciate that; addressing permanent third party billboard signs on page 238 of the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda, section vii), which requires permanent third party ground signs be separated from other ground signs on the property by thirty metres; thinking that restriction is unnecessary because when we work with a property owner to identify where you want to put a sign on a property, we have to ensure that a ground sign on the property that exists already remains unchanged in terms of site lines as a result of our sign being installed, if their sign were to block ours, we can then sell that sign at a lower rate which is against our best interests and is also an inappropriate location because their sign would therefore block part of the view or site lines to their sign; working with the property owner in that sense, there is cooperation that requires them to be separated from their ground sign on the same property; we feel that when these sort of restrictions are incorporated into a by-law or results in a unnecessary amount of variances which will likely be something that is passed at Council as a result; asking that this restriction be removed from the new by-law and allow the Industry to cooperate with the property owner and identify an appropriate location based on specific attributes of that property.
 - Art, London Property Management Association, 102-460 Berkshire Drive – advising that the London Property Management Association is a non-profit association that provides information and education to landlords in the city; indicating that the Association represents the interests of both large and small property owners and has more than four hundred landlord members representing approximately thirty-five thousand rental units; noting that a majority own or manage ten units or less; pointing out that the Association does not support the proposed amendments to this by-law primarily because of the amendments proposed in Appendix A to the administrative fees; advising that this is primarily based on the amendments that will double or triple the permit application and

administration fees; stating that the Association is concerned about the impact this fee hike will have on the many landlords in the city; advising that signs provide a means of public expression and are vital to the success of many businesses in London; outlining that signs are commonly posted by landlords to attract new tenants and to fill vacancies; indicating that the recommendation does not address how a significant increase in fees in the future will affect the ability of individuals and business owners to post signs; noting that in many situations the tripled fees may have the effect of prohibiting public expression or stifling economic growth in London; indicating that the City has had a building vacancy problem for many years and these fees can in effect punish residential and commercial buildings for attempting to attract new tenants; indicating that the City's only explanation for requiring additional payment seems to be that enforcement is costly; with respect, it seems absurd to suggest that the City's administrative expenses per applicant have tripled over the nine years since this by-law was first introduced; pointing out that the fees are only meant to cover the actual administrative costs associated with this by-law; the recommendation before this Committee refers to a number of steps that the City will take to streamline the sign permit application process; if the process is being streamlined, why is the City tripling administrative fees; the London Property Management Association submits that further consideration must be given to this proposed by-law before it is approved; the Committee must carefully consider whether the new fees cover actual administrative expenses incurred by the City and whether this drastic increase in fees will have a crippling financial impact on landlords, businesses and individuals; amendments to the fee schedule should only be considered after the application process has been streamlined in accordance with the recommendation before this Committee; any increase in fees should reflect actual administrative costs to the City as opposed to the excessive fees being proposed today.