

Committee: **London and Middlesex Housing Corporation**

Organization/Sector represented: **myself**

Name: **Stephanie Marentette Di Battista**

Occupation: **lawyer**

Work experience: **I am presently a commercial litigation lawyer with my own practice, focusing on construction law, real estate law and estate law. Prior to opening my practice, I worked with a large, full-service firm and a boutique litigation firm. Before becoming a lawyer, I worked in the federal civil service as both a civil servant and a ministerial staffer for various departments.**

Education: **I have an Honours Bachelor of Social Science from University of Ottawa in International Development and Globalization with the FLS 3500 certificate (French as a second language designation), a Juris Doctor from Western University and a certificate in international and European business law from Jean Moulin III. I am currently working towards my Master of Law (LLM) at Western University in evidence and privacy law. I am presently a licensed barrister, solicitor and notary in the Province of Ontario.**

Skills: **I feel that as a general commercial litigation practitioner with a specific focus on property disputes, such as real estate and construction, I would be able to assist with Board with a wide range of issues including human resources, landlord-tenant disputes, construction and maintenance issues and the acquisition of new properties.**

Interest reason: **I am writing my request for consideration for this post approximately 5 days following London's municipal election, which I ran in but was unfortunately not successful. The reason why I ran for a counsel position is simple: I think London has given a lot to me and I wanted to return the favour. But just because I lost does not take away my desire to serve my community. Consequently, I made the decision to apply to a handful of vacancies for committees that complete work in areas that formed large parts of my platform with the hope that I might still be able to contribute to the city that has given me so much. The London & Middlesex Housing Corporation is of particular interest to me because I think it goes without saying that one of the biggest issues of concern raised during the election was the crisis currently facing London in terms of the stock of affordable housing. I was always aware of this problem at least in the back of my mind, but the debates and all candidate meetings caused me to conduct a lot of research into this issue and I was honestly shocked at how bad it is. To me it is very disheartening to see this level of difficulty in a city like London and I think that the area of law in which I practice might allow me to help contribute to working towards a solution.**

Contributions: **First, as noted above, I am a commercial litigation lawyer with experience in construction and real estate law. I believe that my experience in these fields would allow me to assist with a variety of issues such as landlord-tenant disputes, the care and maintenance of the properties, and the construction of new affordable housing facilities. Second, as further noted above, I was a candidate in this past election. From my canvassing adventures as well as from attending town halls, debates and all candidates' meetings, I had many opportunities to speak with people not just about the fact that we are facing a crisis, but about some ideas concerning how to address it. I believe that I would be able to take these discussions to the board with a view to identifying the true scope of the unmet need and working towards mitigation.**

Past contributions: **Presently, I serve on the Red Shoe Society Board of Directors as Volunteer Chair, the Big Bash Committee in Support of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the London Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee. I also served as a Board Member to the London Chamber of Commerce, however, I unfortunately had to resign this position in order to be able to run for City Council. In all of the above capacities, the main goal is to analyze challenges and opportunities with a view to service delivery. This is true whether we are discussing the biggest fundraiser to support mentoring programs at Big Brothers Big Sisters, a meal prepared by volunteers at Ronald McDonald House or a policy paper that will be submitted on behalf of business owners in London by the Chamber of Commerce. I believe that my problem-solving experience, particularly with a view to collaboration, is applicable in this case and would allow me to be an effective member of the Board.**

Interpersonal: **First, I am a litigation lawyer, so I primarily spend my time debating with others. This may not seem like a job that would embody the qualities listed by this**

question, but a legal career is actually a fantastic teacher in the rules of civility. The practice of law demands that lawyers behave collegially and respectfully at all times despite often being required to advance diametrically opposing views either during negotiations or a hearing. Case in point, in Court we refer to opposing counsel as “my friend”. Second, as I noted above, prior to becoming a lawyer, I was fairly heavily involved in partisan politics and the federal civil service. Again, this occupation might seem counterintuitive to the question, but the reality is that you cannot accomplish anything on Parliament Hill or in a ministerial department if you are not willing to sit down with your opposition to work through a problem. I think that these two experiences have allowed me to develop into someone who listens to understand and sees criticism as an opportunity for improvement. I am someone who sees the value in a debate, and not an argument, where everyone has the chance to respectfully say their piece before a decision is made that, at minimum, considers all viewpoints, and hopefully results in the best possible outcome. This is the type of approach I would bring to the Board if I were given the honour of being selected to serve on it.

Interview interest: Yes