

Committee: **Committee of Adjustment**

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 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: **Because of my unique background in public policy and law, I believe that I would be able to serve as an impartial board member with a view to decisions that are grounded in feedback from Londoners in terms of how our city should grow, our current growth policies such as the London Plan as well as the relevant zoning, building and other applicable legislation.**

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 Committee of Adjustment is of particular interest for me because I believe the Committee of Adjustment has a significant impact on how London grows. When an entrepreneur wants to open a business and purchase a property for same, they often find themselves before the committee seeking a minor variance or possibly a complete rezoning. I truly feel that SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises) are the backbone of our community and it would be very exciting to have an opportunity help shape the way London develops and to support our SMEs while ensuring that our city moves forward in well-planned, forward-looking manner.**

Contributions: **First, as noted above, I am a construction lawyer. I also provide real estate transactional services for clients. I believe that my knowledge of the zoning laws, building codes, the London Plan and other applicable legislation would allow me to effectively adjudicate the types of requests that London residents would bring before the committee. Second, as further noted above, I was a candidate in this past election. One of the biggest concerns that was raised with me while canvassing was issues regarding development, whether it be infill development, the construction of new projects or assistance with changing the zoning or applying for minor variances for pre-existing properties. I believe that as a result of this, I have a well-informed impression of what London residents generally would consider to be problematic and what they would consider to be something that would move London forward in a positive way. My candidacy also caused me to study the London Plan and other policy documents in-depth to prepare for debates and all candidates meetings, so I also believe that I am well informed on London's current policy initiatives concerning development and growth. I believe that my current profession coupled with my experience as a candidate would allow me to critically analyze proposals before the committee from a comprehensive perspective and to contribute to decisions that are legally sound and in compliance with the policy goals clearly articulated in municipal planning documents such as the London Plan with a view to the best interest of London residents.**

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 committee if I were given the honour of being selected to serve on it.

Interview interest: **Yes**