

Committee: **Committee of Adjustment**

Organization/Sector represented: **Londoners**

Name: **Deirdre Pinto**

Occupation: **Currently, I am a full-time Uber driver. I have done almost 10,000 rides in London and received a plaque for having the highest customer service rating in London. Previously, I was a Delivery Driver in the downtown, Wortley, SOHO, Western, and Westmount.**

Work experience: **As an Employment Counsellor and Job Developer at the Disability Employment Opportunity Centre in North Bay and Causeway Work Centre in Ottawa, my clients had severe mental health issues, learning / developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities. I assisted them in finding and keeping suitable employment. As an Employment and Training Specialist at True Self Debwewendizwin Employment and Training in North Bay, I aided women who desired to leave abusive relationships with assistance in pursuing post-secondary education and/or job search assistance. In these organizations, I also facilitated numerous workshops to teach clients about skills such as communication, job search, conflict resolution, and safety planning, etc. As an Assessment and Referral Case Manager at Northern Lights in Ottawa, I assessed clients and referred them to the appropriate agencies for services to address their various needs. As a Settlement Counsellor at the North Bay and District Multicultural Centre, I helped immigrants with issues, including job search, obtaining documents (OHIP, DL, SIN card, etc.), school placement for their children, looking for housing, legal assistance, etc. My volunteer work includes cooking and organizing 100% profit fundraisers for The Gathering Place soup kitchen in North Bay, organizing the volunteers for an MS Carnation Campaign Day, and helping fellow peers in LGBTQ support centres. As a Co-Trainer, I taught Suicide Intervention skills to over 300 professionals and students in various fields (police officers, SSWs, PSWs, nurses, paramedics, social workers, etc.).**

Education: **I graduated with a 4.036 GPA from Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School in Virginia. I completed my B.A. in Sociology and Political Science (with academic Distinction) from McGill University. I completed my M.A. in Sociology with a Specialization in Gender Studies from Lakehead University.**

Skills: **As a Sociologist, I have excellent verbal and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, a strong understanding of qualitative and quantitative research, and am able to think critically about issues with a solutions-oriented approach. I worked as a Delivery Driver in the downtown, SOHO, Western, Westmount, and Wortley areas for 1 year. I am London's #1 top-rated Uber driver and have completed almost 10,000 rides. I have driven on almost every single road in London, and therefore have witnessed first-hand so many of changes happening in this city pertaining to development. When cases are brought forward to this committee, I will know where these locations are because I have a strong understanding of London's map. I feel that my academic skillset and work experience will allow me to be a productive member of this committee.**

Interest reason: **As an immigrant to Canada, I have lived in 5 Canadian cities. London is the only city that finally felt like "home" to me. In my current and most recent jobs, I have not been fully putting into use all of my skillsets. In a role such as sitting on this committee, I believe I could put my skillsets to use for a greater purpose. Due to the nature of my most recent jobs, I see so much of the development that is happening in London and I know London's map really well. This would be a great learning opportunity for me to learn about city-by-laws and procedures and how to implement them in cases that are brought forward regarding boundaries and planning.**

Contributions: **My ability to research, analyse, and interact effectively with all kinds of personalities and people (who are on the committee or presenting to the committee) using a tactful and diplomatic approach will assist this body in making decisions about city planning issues.**

Past contributions: **I have not yet been on a committee or board, but would greatly appreciate being given the opportunity to be on this committee so that I can demonstrate in real terms how I can contribute to this committee.**

Interpersonal: **The many jobs I have held required the ability to engage in dialogues with peers, customers, supervisors, and other people in a respectful manner. Over the years, I have honed my communication and interpersonal skills, and am able to reach across to**

people with very different and even opposing viewpoints using a diplomatic and tactful approach. Some of my experience in exchanging views with others and appreciating and respecting their skills, abilities, and knowledge would include: When I worked as an Employment Counsellor with various populations, often times I would have to interact with their family members, government case workers, and their other professional helpers (SSWs, PSWs, counsellors, employers, life coaches, group home workers, etc.). It was often required that we put our heads together using thoughtful and respectful dialogue to think of how to best meet the needs of my clients. As an Uber driver, I have done almost 10,000 rides. I was given a plaque for having the highest customer service rating. I do not drive the nicest car, but I do have outstanding interpersonal skills. I have had approximately 20,000 passengers in my car. Due to my personality and interest in talking about socio-political topics with my passengers, I have had to engage my passengers in a respectful way, because we talk about all kinds of issues and we don't always necessarily agree. But the conversations have always been thoughtful, constructive, and thanks to these wonderful conversations, my customers have given me the unique title of being London's top-rated Uber driver. Also, politically-speaking, people who tend to lean on the other side of the political spectrum know that I am one of the few people they know that will take the initiative to reach out to them to try to understand in a meaningful and constructive manner their perspectives on issues. I am well-known to be the kind of person that welcomes conversations about difficult topics with people who are likely to have an opposing or different perspective. I am solutions-based, flexible, and willing to compromise. When people stop communicating, that is when there is a problem. To fix issues and be productive and constructive, I will always be the type of person to keep the respectful lines of communication with others open.

Interview interest: Yes