



## News Release

### Advocating for Transparency and Equity: A Better Richmond Hill Seeks Committee of Adjustment Reform

**Richmond Hill, Ontario, March 18, 2024** - With a view towards fostering a more transparent, fair, and equitable process within the Committee of Adjustment (COA), **A Better Richmond Hill (ABRH)** has released a comprehensive study report outlining critical concerns and proposing actionable solutions to balance the interests of all affected by the growth in residential construction infilling. The report, spearheaded by John Li, Ph.D., a current member of the COA, unveils systemic issues and suggests reforms aimed at better aligning the committee's operations with residents' interests.

The study reveals an unusually high application approval rate within the Richmond Hill COA, significantly exceeding those of neighboring municipalities. This trend, coupled with a disproportionate favoring of developer interests over community concerns, underscores a pressing need for a more balanced and considerate approach to minor variance and severance application assessments. The report also highlights a concerning lack of operational transparency compared to other GTA municipalities, with Richmond Hill's COA falling short in providing access to application details, providing reasons for their decisions that consider and account for the opposing views presented to them, , and ensuring public access to meeting records.

Addressing the need for change, ABRH proposes a series of strategic reforms, including:

- **Enhancing Transparency and Public Engagement:** Mandating full disclosure of application details and extending public review periods to ensure community members are well-informed and able to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process.
- **Adhering to the Planning Act and Integrating Best Practices:** Aligning COA operations with the Official Plan's compatibility criteria and learning from the successful practices of neighboring municipalities to improve transparency, fairness, and regulatory compliance.
- **Ensuring Equitable Representation on the Committee:** Restructuring the COA's membership to include a diverse range of stakeholders, thereby reducing bias and promoting impartial decision-making.
- **Promoting Accountability and Leadership:** Revising operational processes to prioritize public service and accountability, fostering a culture that values community welfare and engagement.

These reforms aim to transform the Richmond Hill COA into a model of good governance, restoring trust and promoting a fair and transparent planning process. ABRH urges the Mayor and City Council to support these necessary changes for the benefit of the Richmond Hill community.

ABRH is a non-share non-profit community organization incorporated in 2021 and registered during Richmond Hill municipal elections as a third-party political advertiser.

**For the full report, visit:** [Reforming the Richmond Hill COA for Transparency and Equity](#)

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