



March 21, 2019

RE: Barton-Tiffany Film Studios

To Hamilton City Council:

The Beasley Neighbourhood Association was founded in 2007, and our vision is “To improve the quality of life for people who work, live and play in the Beasley neighbourhood.” We are a forward-looking and well-organized Association that independently consulted residents to create two Neighbourhood Plans in 2011 & 2017 in an effort to identify and address problems, and pursue opportunities that can help make a Beasley better place for everyone.

Over many years, members have been involved in public engagement with the City on Setting Sail, the Barton-Tiffany Urban Design Study, provincial transit consultations that led to the West Harbour GO. Though we usually refrain from commenting on developments occurring in surrounding neighbourhoods, we are greatly concerned by the thoughtful and detailed letter from the Board of the Central Neighbourhood Association that alerted the BNA of the proposed film studios on the City-owned Barton-Tiffany Lands.

We understand the less than ideal land-use options imposed on these City-owned lands to satisfy CN during the Setting Sail OMB appeal process, however the secondary plan’s vision and core principles should remain paramount and not be abandoned: Barton-Tiffany can one day be a mixed-use neighbourhood, and the West Harbour GO Station adjacent to the site makes it a prime location for residential intensification on a longer scale, to capitalize on the significant taxpayer investment in the area bounded by Beasley, Central and the North End neighbourhoods.

There is considerable industrial land in East Hamilton well serviced by local highways, truck-routes, that is more accessible and welcoming to creative-industry workers from all over the GTA, who will surely be attracted by employment opportunities at a studio. Routing 24/7, regional employment through our revitalizing downtown to service industrial use, will not enhance the area, including our neighbourhood immediately east of the site.

Our members also include those in the creative industry who value job-creation, so we urge Council to further consider the likely impacts of a warehouse/studio operation near a growing residential area, and mitigate them before approving this rezoning effort. We also urge you to consider the longer-term value of this waterfront land, and ensure that a clear proposal from the proponent is shared and reviewed to avoid City-owned lands being transferred to an absentee speculator, like the many who have owned land in Barton-Tiffany’s recent history.

Industrial buildings like the ones that will surely be constructed for a studio complex are disposable. Many have been torn down in our neighbourhood over the past century, and now

have spent years as parking lots. This proposal looks to be a mix of warehousing and parking for its out-of-town employees, ensuring both past and present will become future at Barton-Tiffany. Meanwhile, dynamic commercial and residential development is occurring on James St. North, a stone's throw from Barton-Tiffany.

The 2014 Barton-Tiffany Urban Design study, to which our members contributed hours of their time, was so forward looking and presented a positive vision that connected a revitalized Central Park with beautiful recreation areas of the West Harbour. As in the case of the Hamilton Police Services forensics building on Catherine St. Beasley residents' concerns with industrial re-development are driven by the reality that warehouses, unless carefully designed, do not integrate well into the fabric of a live/work/play neighbourhood. Hamilton can do better.

Should the film studio not materialize after a deal to sell off the City land (assembled while implementing the former, failed stadium precinct plan), we are also concerned the location constitutes a prime waterfront speculation opportunity for an absentee landowner, like the ones that have left much of the Barton-Tiffany area fenced off and littered with toxic waste (see 249 Hess St. N, as a prime example).

Please do not let history repeat itself at Barton-Tiffany. We respectfully ask Council enact conditional zoning on this site, reverting it to the existing zoning should the proposed "cultural development" not come about within one year. In addition, let the public see the detailed film studio proposal, have the proponent address the CNA's concerns, and then re-zone and sell the lands afterwards, anchored on a better understanding of the proposal's merits, drawbacks, and how it can integrate into the longer-term vision for Barton-Tiffany.

Sincerely,



Alexandria Anderson
Co-Chair



Karlie Rogerson
Co-Chair