



August 28, 2022

Hon. Steven Clark

Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing

777 Bay Street, 17th floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Dear Minister:

Re. BILL 3: Strong Mayors, Building Better Homes Act, 2022

The Manotick Village and Community Association (MVCA) comprised of over 400 members is a voluntary, not-for-profit, community organization committed to advancing the interests of our historic village and community of Manotick and the quality of life of our residents.

In 2001 Manotick was amalgamated into the City of Ottawa, adding our rural community to the diverse communities already part of Ottawa and requiring Council to consider our needs and values through a rural verses city centre (urban) lens. The so called 'one glove' does not fit all, even across one city.

Since this amalgamation we have been concerned about any policies and programs at the City of Ottawa that impact us. Bill 3 and its impact on good government in Ottawa presents serious concerns for us.

For 157 years, the City of Ottawa has governed its residents by a City Council democratically elected by its residents. Our elected City Council share collective responsibility for the decisions that have allowed our city to grow to Ontario's second-largest city and our nation's capital. While democracy isn't always perfect, we value our right to a representative government.

Bill 3 gives the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing authority to designate municipalities, including Ottawa, to be subject to its provisions without consultation nor consent from residents as to why this move is necessary. We oppose this initiative.

Bill 3 would permit the head of Council (our Mayor) to take over powers currently shared across the entire Ottawa City Council, to hire and dismiss the City's chief administrative officer and senior members of City staff, including the city clerk, police chief, fire chief, and medical officer of health (among others).

We also oppose the measure that would allow one member of Council to be responsible for hiring and firing of key municipal positions as it negates the role of City Council, stymies the effectiveness and authority of our freely- elected Council and disrespects the voter.

Permitting the head of Council (our Mayor) to veto any bylaw that he or she felt would violate provincial policy presents a conflict of interest between serving the needs of a municipal community and those of the province and could lead to litigation if a dispute over the veto legitimacy ever arose. The Minister already has such powers under the Municipal Act to veto any such bylaw. There is no need to complicate matters by granting such powers to the head of Council.

Enabling the Mayor to propose the City's annual budget and veto any amendment from Council is entirely unwarranted and undemocratic. Ottawa City Council has had the collective responsibility for adopting the annual budget of the City by majority vote, and levying the taxes to fund it. This practice has worked for over a century and a half. The government offers no compelling reason as to why this should change.

We elect our local Councilor to represent our interests at City Council. The City's budget process requires a majority of Council to approve it and provide the programs our residents ask for, be it park maintenance, public transit, recycling, etc. In this way, our Councilor is able to help arbitrate across competing demands and pass budgets that meet most concerns. What Bill 3 proposes here obviates this democratic process. We oppose this measure.

In conclusion, the MVCA opposes Bill 3 as a threat to the democratic process and practices in Ottawa and ultimately our community. While "Building Homes" forms part of the bill's title we see no provisions in this bill that would accomplish this.

We ask that the Government withdraw Bill 3: Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022h

Yours truly,

Irene Staron,
President – MVCA

Cc Ottawa City Council
Ottawa area MPPs
Leaders of the Opposition Parties