



June 14, 2019

Office of the Clerk
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

To Richmond Hill City Council,

As the voice of business in Richmond Hill, we have been made aware that the City of Richmond Hill has been strictly enforcing its sign bylaw in relation to open house signs. While we support enforcement of the law, this change in policy has led some businesses in the Real Estate industry to question whether the rules are reasonable.

We raised this issue with the Toronto Real Estate Board and consulted with our members in real estate. Now that staff are reviewing the issue with an eye to recommendations for council, the Board of Trade is writing to recommend changes to the sign bylaw as they relate to open house signs. We would like to see open house signs allowed on public property in Richmond Hill with reasonable limits to ensure that they do not pose a nuisance to residents.

For example, there could be a limit on the number of signs for each open house. There could also be a maximum time before and after the open house that signs are allowed up. A maximum distance from the open house where signs may be placed also seems like a good idea. Such limits are objectively reasonable, and they are also supported by our members in the real estate industry.

Please note that we do not believe a permit should be required. Real Estate agents are already licenced and required to train regularly. Most of them also pay to join professional associations. The amount of paperwork involved in issuing licences – and determining which signs are actually licenced – is likely to cost the City more than any fees that could reasonably be charged.

As you likely know, complete prohibition of open house signs on public property has not been successful. The end result is that agents who want to follow the rules are disadvantaged. There is also pressure to break the rules to compete with other agents. The current system is not working, so it is time to try a new approach.

We believe that rules allowing open house signs in Richmond Hill, subject to reasonable restrictions, would be more effective at controlling their use and more fair to those real estate agents and brokers who make an effort to follow the law. As an industry, real estate is very important to our local economy. The Richmond Hill Board of Trade hopes you will agree that legalizing open house signs with reasonable limits will improve compliance, support local business and improve the aesthetics on our local roads.

Sincerely,

Jason Cherniak
Chair
Government Affairs Committee
Richmond Hill Board of Trade