

February 2, 2021

City of Vaughan
Office of the City Clerk – Committee of Adjustment
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1
cofa@vaughan.ca

Dear Office of the City Clerk:

Re: Minor variance application #A130/20 for 1435 Centre Street
North Toronto Cat Rescue

I have been volunteering with the North Toronto Cat Rescue since June 2015. I am one of many volunteers who attend at 1435 Centre Street one or more times per week to clean, feed or medicate cats in need. I can personally attest that the animals in this shelter are given the best of care and medical attention and that it is truly a labour of love, not only for the operator of the shelter, Donna Cox, but for all of us volunteers as well.

In support of this application, I would like to add the following personal perspective to the submissions made by Mr. Margaritis:

Desirable for the Appropriate Use of the Land/Building/Structure

The use of this building as a Rescue Facility could not be more appropriate. As a building that is slated for demolition within a limited time, it is unlikely that any other commercial enterprise would be inclined to invest the effort in developing a location only to be required to move within a few years. As a result, if this use were not being made of the property, it would likely be vacant or under utilized.

Furthermore, this particular building is perfect for the Rescue Facility. As a no-cage, no-kill shelter, cats live in compatible groupings at the shelter, each group having its own room. The layout of this building, with several individually separated rooms, is much more appropriate for this purpose than would be another building with a more open concept. Moreover, after extensive searching, it has proven impossible to locate another building that is as appropriate for the shelter as this one, given its location and layout. I respectfully suggest that it is desirable in the public interest that this use be made of the land for these reasons and for the reasons more fully set out below.

Maintains the Intent of the Official Plan

It is true that the Rescue Facility takes in abandoned, injured and discarded cats and nurses them back to health. I have personally seen many instances where a feral cat has been brought in and over time has changed from a terrified, hissing animal to a loving, affectionate pet. This is a direct result of the patience, love and trust fostered by all of us at the shelter. When such animals are removed from the streets and spayed/neutered, not only does it reduce additional breeding and complaints that these cats are pests, but it has also provided companion animals for thousands of adopters over the years. The shelter has received innumerable testimonials from happy adopters whose quality of life has been improved by the addition of one or more companions adopted from the shelter. This is a win for all concerned; the cats, the community and the adopters. Any minor variance that is necessary to further these purposes can only be considered consistent with the intent of the OP to improve the quality of life of the City's citizens.

Maintains the Intent of the Zoning Bylaw

The zoning bylaw provides for mixed uses, none of which are inconsistent with use as an animal shelter. Specifically, uses in the C-1 Zone must be conducted "wholly within an enclosed building without any drive-in service or curb service" and "no manufacturing or processing" may be carried on. The Rescue Facility fits within these parameters as the provider of a service which is conducted wholly within an enclosed building, with no drive-in service or curb service. No manufacturing or processing is carried on. There is plenty of parking and traffic flow is not disrupted. Furthermore, no person stays in the building overnight.

Minor

The activities of the Rescue Facility take place fully within the building and have no impact on surrounding property. Unlike a dog kennel or other facility with an outdoor component, there are no noise or other concerns that could potentially impact surrounding property owners. No alteration of the land use is required and no public health or community nuisance issues arise. If there is any concern about the manner in which the shelter is run, as a long time volunteer, I can personally speak to the professional manner of operation and high standards of cleanliness maintained at the shelter. Every room is swept and mopped twice a day, waters are changed and litter boxes are cleaned twice daily. Cats receive the best of care, including wet food twice a day, unlimited access to dry food, and any medical care required, including vaccinations, spaying and neutering. Since all of this takes place within a wholly enclosed building, the impact on neighbouring property owners is nil.

Fee Waiver

As an NTCR volunteer, I go into the shelter every week. I sweep, mop, change waters, scoop litters, clean surfaces, shake out linens and leave each room in sparkling clean condition when I leave. I have been doing this for over five years for no compensation. I don't do it for a profit, because there is no monetary profit to be had. Any consideration that could be given to waiving the application fee would be greatly appreciated by all of us volunteers, as we know that monetary resources are scarce, and the money thereby saved will go directly into the care and feeding of these shelter cats, for whom we have all given so much of our time and effort.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Catherine Morin
NTCR volunteer and City of Vaughan resident