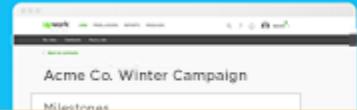


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Market

How replacing the OMB could make Toronto homes even pricier

Josh Sherman May 30, 2017



Photo: Brad Lamb

Love the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) or hate it, without the quasi-judicial tribunal that settles development disputes across the province, Toronto real estate may get even more expensive, suggests a high-profile developer and broker.

“You cannot leave these decisions in the hands of ratepayers and NIMBYs — you can’t,” Brad Lamb tells BuzzBuzzNews (NIMBY is a term for someone who has a “not-in-my-backyard” attitude towards development).

Lamb’s comments follow a provincial government announcement about replacing the contentious OMB, which has been dogged by complaints it too frequently sides with developers over municipalities and community groups.

If legislation passes, a “Local Planning Appeal Tribunal” would stand in place of the OMB, a move Ontario says would “give greater weight to the decisions of local communities,” and protect more municipal planning decisions from appeals.

But Lamb suggests this could ultimately lead to “less development, less jobs, less homes, [and] higher prices,” as the balance of power shifts in favour of neighbourhoods’ “selfish desire for the status quo” rather than increased density.

“All you’re going to get are developments that absolutely fit in with the community’s guidelines, absolutely fit in with the city planning guidelines. Anything that’s even remotely different... it’s not going to happen,” adds Lamb, founder of [Lamb Development Corp.](#) and [Brad J. Lamb Realty Inc.](#)

Lamb emphasizes that the legislation has not been passed yet, “but if it is what I think it’s going to be, it’s over. It’s over for development in Toronto.”

A spokesperson with the Ontario government tells BuzzBuzzNews the legislation will be tabled today.

Lamb says developers have too many “soft costs” (he cites architects, lawyers and planners as examples) to “take a chance on something where we don’t have any possible route to victory.”

If community groups are in fact able to stymie development more frequently, supply will take a hit as developers shy away from density. In a high-demand environment, prices will rise as buyers compete for a lower number of new homes coming onto the market. “Our city is now in the hands of NIMBYs,” Lamb adds.

The only issue with the OMB, says Lamb, is that it was understaffed and therefore unable to rule on appeals in a timely enough manner.

The board, he says, “allowed a reasonable level of negotiations” between community groups, developers and municipalities.

Read Lamb’s initial reaction to the OMB announcement below.



ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD
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 **Brad J Lamb** 
@BradJLamb 

Terrible day for [#Ontario](#). The Wynne gov't is going to neuter the Ontario Municipal Board. My thoughts on it here: bit.ly/2rg8BUN

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