

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Changes to the Ontario Municipal Board

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is an independent tribunal that is charged with hearing appeals and ruling on disputes regarding zoning issues.

OMB is comprised of individuals appointed by the government, and includes individuals with a wide array of professions, such as lawyers, architects, planners and accountants.

When individuals in a community disagree on a local land use planning issue and are unable to resolve their disagreement, they can take their case to OMB for a final decision to be made. For example, if a local council allows for restaurant to be built in a specific area, but will not allow for a drive-through window, the restaurant owner has the right to appeal this decision at OMB.

Part of the Ministry's review of the Ontario Municipal Board will look at the following areas: The tribunal's jurisdiction and powers, citizen participation and local perspective, clear and predictable decision-making, modern procedures and faster decisions, and alternative dispute resolution and fewer hearings. In addition, the Ministry has released a public consultation document that outlines the key areas of focus of the review, as well as questions for individuals to provide feedback. Over the course of the review, individuals can attend town hall meetings across the province that will allow individuals to learn about the proposed changes and ask questions and provide commentary.

The central issue that the government needs to consider is the balancing of local decision making from councils and the provincially mandated land use targets of intensification and density. The government also needs to balance the autonomy of local governments and their expertise in what their community needs, with the right to appeal of all individuals across the province.

I encourage individuals to participate in the consultation and provide feedback. If you are interested in learning more about the review of the Ontario Municipal Board, including reviewing the public consultation document, or attending a town hall session and providing feedback, please visit www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page14965.aspx

The deadline to submit your comments is Dec. 19, 2016. If you need assistance finding information on the review, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 1-800-265-1603 or sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org

It is important your voice is heard to ensure our province's adjudicative system is working best for our local communities.

