

## It's time to scrap the obnoxious OMB

The provincial government has pledged to reform the controversial, unelected, unaccountable Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

Long-standing opponents of this quasi-judicial body, which is empowered to overturn planning decisions made by democratically elected officials, will know reforms have long been promised typically at election time.

Politicians, community groups, environmentalists and others have denounced the OMB as little more than an adversarial mechanism through which developers exert their will on a reluctant community.

Just the threat of a lengthy OMB hearing, with its inherent legal expenses, can intimidate a municipality into a settlement the community opposes.

The public perception that the OMB often acts as an arm of the development industry is well founded.

In a recent decision, a panel of divisional court judges struck down an OMB directive to the Town of Richmond Hill. The OMB had (astonishingly) set a cap on how much green space the town could demand from condo builders in essence acting as an agent for the construction industry.

A couple of years ago, the OMB overruled an Official Plan that took Waterloo Region eight years to produce.

The OMB wanted 10 times more land designated for development than had been allotted.

Some cities have tried to extricate themselves from OMB jurisdiction out of sheer frustration.

As far as reforms are concerned, the province will consult with stakeholders.

Preliminary proposals would limit the OMB's ability to hear appeals and completely overturn decisions.

They would prevent appeals of secondary plans, which are neighbourhood-specific plans, for two years and promote mediation over adversarial hearings.

Would that be an improvement? Sure.

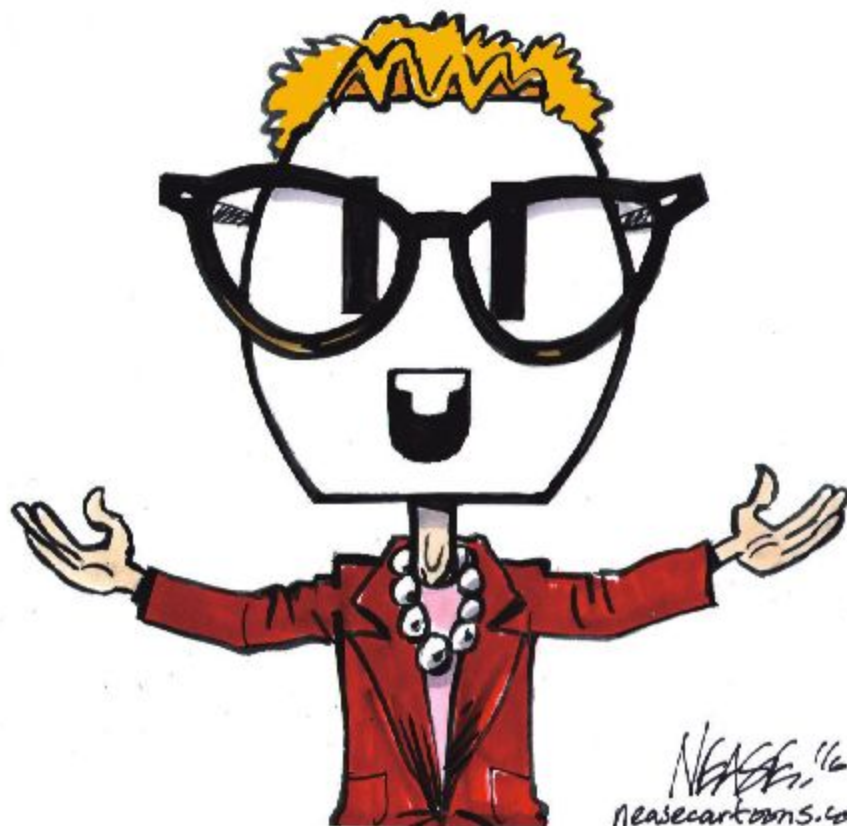
But, the best solution would be for Minister of Municipal Affairs Bill Mauro to scrap this noxious board once and for all.

Let's hope that's the message stakeholders deliver to Queen's Park.

### The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited. The Independent & Free Press is a member of the Ontario Press Council, which is an independent ethical organization established to deal with editorial concerns. For additional information or to file a complaint, contact [info@ontpress.com](mailto:info@ontpress.com) or call 416-340-1981.

## The face of Ontario's Hydro rate nightmare...



## THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

905-873-0301  
**Publisher:** Neil Oliver  
**General manager:** Steve Foreman  
 (sforeman@theifp.ca, 905-234-1011)  
**Retail advertising manager:** Cindi Campbell  
 (ccampbell@theifp.ca, 905-234-1012)  
**Managing editor:** Chris Vernon  
 (cvernon@metroland.com, 905-234-1020)  
**Distribution:** Shelley Papineau  
 (spapineau@metroland.com, 1-866-838-8960)  
**Classifieds/Real Estate**  
 Kristie Pells  
 (krealstate@theifp.ca, 905-234-1016)  
**Advertising Sales**  
 Jenny Hawkins  
 (jhawkins@theifp.ca, 905-234-1014)  
 Jennifer Spencer  
 (jspencer@theifp.ca, 905-234-1013)  
 Rachael Scutt  
 (rscutt@theifp.ca, 905-234-1015)  
 Kelli Kosonic  
 (kkosonic@theifp.ca, 905-234-1018)  
**Classified Call Centre**  
 1-800-263-6480, Fax 1-866-299-1499  
 classifieds@metroland.com  
**Accounting:** 1-866-773-6575  
**Editorial**  
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/photographer  
 (emaher@theifp.ca, 905-234-1023)  
 Kathryn Boyle: Staff writer/photographer  
 (kboyle@theifp.ca, 905-234-1022)  
**Production**  
 Shelli Harrison (sharrison@theifp.ca 905-234-1017)

Get the latest headlines delivered to your inbox by signing up for our twice weekly electronic newsletter. Go to [www.theifp.ca](http://www.theifp.ca) and click on Newsletter sign-up at the bottom of the homepage.

## Letters to the editor

### Grieving mom meets local angels

We are fairly new to Georgetown. My son, Brian, and I along with my other two sons Adam and Nicholas moved to Georgetown in June of 2015. Right away we loved it we had found our home.

On Oct. 10, 2016 my family's world came crashing down. I got the news no mother is ever supposed to get.

Two police officers from Brampton showed up at my door around 11 p.m. to tell me that my son, my first born and my first love, was gone.

There had been a car accident and Brian, his girlfriend Lauren, and her little sister Michelle were involved.

It was an accident that took them away from us forever.

A tragic unnecessary, senseless accident. The following days were terrible, horrible, defeating, darkening... I couldn't imagine how myself,

my kids, my family could get through this.

We are still grieving and we still don't know where to go or how to continue on.

Every day is a struggle. Every day we take it hour by hour trying to figure out how we are supposed to live our lives without Brian.

The amazing, wonderful, beautiful people of Georgetown gave me strength when I couldn't stand and hope when I felt hopeless.

These amazing souls raised my belief in humanity and took some of my anger away.

In the last week or so I've had donations of meals and money to help with funeral costs, family and friends helping me take care of my little guy when I just didn't have the strength to do so, and love. So much love. More love than I could ever imagine.

I am truly blessed to live here, to belong to a community that, even without knowing me, have cried with me, prayed for my kids and I, grieved with me and got angry along

side me. That has stood with me in one of the hardest times I could have ever dreamed of or faced.

I know that I am not facing this alone. I have this amazing community behind me. Giving me strength to carry on.

To get up and live each day for my kids and for the memory of my son Brian.

I'd like to say a special thank you to Kelli Kosonic. You have been an unspeakable hero to me.

I didn't know I had a guardian angel until you showed your beautiful wings.

Thank you my precious friend, words are not enough. There is a special place in heaven for an angel like you my darling.

Also, a special thank you to Leanne Challenger, who gave my young son a safe place to go, when things got dark at home.

There were too many tears for a child to comprehend. You give him a safe place to just be happy and be a normal kid. I know my son is safe with you.

Maddy Ghoneim,  
Brian McGinnis mother