

CABBAGETOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date: Aug. 25, 2015

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: The Pear Tree, 507 Parliament St., Toronto

In Attendance: Tyler Fleming, Phil Frei, Chiara Novak, Marc Simmons, Kelley Teahen, James Wood

Regrets: Trish Finkelstein, Keith Lawrance, Scott Morrow

The meeting began with a welcome from President Phil Frei and the review of the July 14, 2015 CRA meeting minutes, which were approved following minor amendments.

MEMBERSHIP

First topic of discussion was membership. At present, the Cabbagetown Residents Association has 263 paid member households and 530 on the CRA email list – while some are two emails from one household, others are those who subscribe for free to the monthly newsletter.

The newsletter is a popular draw, with an open rate of 64 per cent – substantially higher than most other organizations like the CRA. Discussion ensued on how to convert the newsletter sign-up group into paid members as well as points raised about whether or not the association should even charge membership, which is \$20 annually and supports the work and events of the volunteer organization.

Tyler and Phil have suggested a membership drive to happen after the federal election campaign of Oct. 19 (so our efforts do not conflict with political canvassers). Tyler would like to try some new techniques to attract new members, taking a street canvas approach and distributing postcards that describe the association's work along with a "call to action" to join. Others pointed out they do not appreciate at-the-door sales; however, the concept is that the association board and other volunteers would canvas in their own neighbourhoods where they would know many of the people they approach.

Tyler showed the board members some samples of postcards or posters that could also be created and distributed by the CRA to highlight the quality of life and hidden treasures within the neighbourhood.

LANEWAY CLEANUPS

James and Scott are working on this and report they are setting priorities: how many clean-ups can be done with the volunteer forces available and what lanes need them most. James proposed setting as a goal one laneway cleanup a month, getting neighbours in that area involved. He recommended soliciting support from local businesses such as Home Hardware for needed bags and supplies. James and other dog owners have organized, on their own, what they have nicknamed "Poopapalooza" in the spring to clean up the winter leave-behinds in Riverdale Park's offleash area, saying last year about 20 people worked for three hours. This park cleanup, in the past promoted through a facebook page, could become part of the CRA's efforts, supporting its organization and promotion.

ADMINISTRATION AND BYLAWS

With the transition of board members, Phil noted there are some administrative tasks to ensure have been completed and he volunteered to get in touch with past board members, notably past treasurer Rodd Carr-Harris, to ensure appropriate tax and other forms have been filed and are up to date.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE CABBAGETOWN PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION (CPA) AND THE CABBAGETOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (BIA).

Earlier in 2015, members from the CPA reached out to the residents' association about undertaking a joint membership drive and creating closer alliances. The current CRA board expressed some concerns about confusion that could cause and how the two organizations need to discuss further their roles and goals. Vice-president James Wood has agreed to be a liaison with CPA – he already serves as a volunteer with the Cabbagetown Tour of Homes organized by CPA. In exchange, David Swain from CPA will join the CRA as an observer at the CRA meetings.

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARDS

Currently the CRA relies on its monthly newsletter and frequently updated website to disseminate news; the CPA and the BIA have a few physical notice boards within the neighbourhood. The group discussed how we could use notice boards in the community and agreed to discuss further with our new CPA liaison, David Swain.

2015 FEDERAL ELECTION and CANDIDATES' REQUEST TO MEET

Members of the CRA board were approached by campaign workers for the NDP and Liberal candidates in the Toronto Centre Riding that encompasses Cabbagetown among many other downtown neighbourhoods from the Don Valley to Bay Street.

Discussion was lengthy and viewpoints divided between those who believed it was polite to respond to a request to meet to those who felt that federal political issues – unlike with municipal issues, where the association acts as point person for residents' concerns – are beyond the purview of the association. Others pointed out that the board are volunteers who meet only once a month formally so a board meeting could not be turned over to a candidate briefing, which would need to happen at another time.

If the CRA were to become involved in organizing a public all-candidates' meeting, it would be in conjunction with other neighbourhood associations within the riding boundaries: there is historical precedent for doing so. However, after much discussion, the decision was made to use the CRA's newsletter and website to promote information about the election and sources of information for voters rather than do either a formal public all candidates' meeting or having board members meet with individual candidates.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Pumpkin Walk happens Nov. 1 and needs a board member lead to organize: Phil asked for a volunteer to step forward and explained some of the tasks that need to be covered.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Phil, seconded by Kelley, at 9:10 p.m.