

CABBAGETOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date: Oct. 6, 2015

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: House on Parliament, Parliament Street

In Attendance: Tyler Fleming, Phil Frei, Chiara Novak, Marc Simmons, Kelley Teahen, James Wood, David Swain, Keith Lawrance, Scott Morrow

Regrets: Trish Finkelstein

WELCOMING DAVID SWAIN from CABBAGETOWN PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION
David Swain will join CRA board meetings as a liaison from the Cabbagetown Preservation Association. While in its early years the CPA's raison d'être was to enforce heritage bylaws, the city now fulfils that function as the neighbourhood is designated under heritage regulations. Now, the CPA focuses on education around the heritage and historic nature of the community and organizes the bi-yearly Homes Tour, annual garden tour, and annual Ghost Walk. The group has around 200 members and provides information on heritage requirements, funds charitable organizational activities at local groups such as the the Boys and Girls Club (revenue coming from the group's popular tours), and are a liaison with the Heritage District Preservation Committee.

The board then reviewed the August 2015 CRA meeting minutes, which were approved following minor amendments.

PUMPKIN WALK NOVEMBER 1 at Riverdale Park West.

Vice-President James Wood is spearheading organization for this. He reported that the needed insurance and ordering of organic-waste disposal bin was completed. He will be in touch with Park Snacks to see if it will open during the Pumpkin Walk time (starting at 5 p.m. on Nov. 1). There is a banner to mount at Winchester and Sumach, and posters and flyers (same design as previous year) are sent to printers. In 2013, people brought 136 pumpkins and, in 2014, there were 117.

He asked for volunteers for distributing posters when they were ready and for help distributing flyers going to households with pumpkins displayed around Oct. 30/31.

The group then brainstormed about possibilities for adding other activities around the Pumpkin Walk for future years: availability of food and beverage; possible judging of pumpkins. David Swain from CPA noted that group does its Ghost Walk around Hallowe'en and next year could time the Ghost Walk to run the same night and include a stroll through Riverdale Park West.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Keith Lawrance reported that there had been feedback from one newsletter subscriber who felt recent crime alerts were fearmongering. The alerts are posted to the website and gathered on the monthly newsletter; people have the option of signing up for immediate alerts when something new is posted. There were 39 subscribers to immediate alerts in the first call, rising to 55 after the invitation was extended a second time in the next newsletter, representing 10 per cent of the mail list. Some have noted they follow the CRA on twitter or facebook, and see the alerts there. The board discussed and agreed the alerts are useful and should be kept to reporting facts, not

suspicious activities, and the alerts should be treated in a “round-up” manner, with fewer details than in the original alerts, when they are bundled up for the monthly report in the newsletter. People who want more details can follow a link to the original alert hosted on the website.

Other communications news: Keith has completed backups for the website and notes the following stories were the most popular in the end-of-September newsletter

1. Spash pad opens
2. CPA Tour of Homes
3. Doug Fisher’s blog
4. Responsible Dog Owner Survey (City of Toronto)
5. Thowback Thursday (history features about Cabbagetown)

The CRA now has 1,053 followers on Twitter, which was busy in September with content generated through the BIA-sponsored Cabbagetown Festival.

TREASURER REPORT

Marc Simmons reported that he and treasurer Trish Finkelstein met with past treasurer Rod Carr-Harris to complete the handover of banking info, chequebooks, spreadsheets, records, and key to the association’s mailbox (at the post office within Shopper’s Drug Mart on Parliament Street). Signing authority at the TD Bank account needs to be transferred from past board members and all agreed to sign necessary paperwork to facilitate the transfer. Marc said was considering investigating computer software to assist with tracking the organization’s finances and running reports. Phil Frei turned over \$500 to deposit to the association account that was recently paid to the association from a film crew set up for a shoot in Cabbagetown.

FORSYTHIA FESTIVAL LEADERSHIP / BOARD MEMBER RESIGNATION

Chiara Novak told the board that, with regret, she was resigning from the Cabbagetown Residents Association board due to an unforeseen increase in personal commitments that will prevent her from devoting time to volunteer activities, including being the CRA lead for the April Forsythia Festival.

President Frei introduced options for how the association can move forward to organize its main yearly event. He noted the Festival, under the previous leadership of Trish Finkelstein, is designed to be run by a central point person. To stick with that model, the CRA would need to find a replacement point person. Another option is to move to a co-chair model or spread the responsibilities more widely. Major responsibilities include:

- Permitting
- Organizing volunteers
- Fundraising / securing donations
- Logistics

There is a very detailed “how-to” manual created by Trish so a new leader would be working to roll out and execute the steps that are fully documented. The group agreed Phil would talk to Trish about ideas for future leadership (possibly tapping existing Forsythia Festival volunteers) and he asked the rest of the board to think about other suggestions for leadership and volunteers for the Festival.

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARDS

The CPA and BIA have some notice boards in Cabbagetown: David Swain suggested CRA could share the CPA boards for things such as Pumpkin Walk and other notices.

WINCHESTER STREET ROOMING HOUSE

While the rooming houses on Winchester Street between Ontario and Parliament are technically out of the geographic territory of the CRA, many CRA members' children go to the Winchester Street Public School across the street from these rooming houses; also many residents in this area are unrepresented by a residents' association. James Wood attended a community meeting run by Toronto Community Housing and Toronto Police; more than 100 people were there, which the police representatives said was a huge turnout and showed unusual levels of concern. As a result, Council Pam McConnell has now become more actively involved in this issue.

Wood said it was a disparate group, with residents from the rooming house also present, and that the meeting was a productive one. Residents are fearful of activities of the house and immediate neighbours on Winchester Street, under the leadership of Heather Wilberforce, have delineated concerns and proposed some solutions to be implemented before the rooming house licence is renewed. These include:

- 24/7 security
- closing in and securing back fire stairwells that are currently the setting for drug-dealing and prostitution
- better screening process for residents

David Swain said the CPA is "constantly talking" to Toronto Housing about the THC stock in Cabbagetown.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

This will be a project for later in the year, led by Tyler Fleming. At present, the association has connected with 355 of approximately 2,000 households in the current boundaries of the CRA, although there are some members live outside the official CRA boundaries in the area west of Parliament commonly thought of as Cabbagetown but without resident association representation. The Cabbagetown South Residents Association represents residents south of Carleton.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by James Wood, seconded by Phil Frei, at 9 p.m.