

CABBAGETOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date: Nov. 30, 2016

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Hey, Lucy! Carlton Street

Directors in Attendance: Phil Frei, James Wood, Evelyn Sommers, Keith Lawrance, Kelley Teahen, Tina Card, Carolyn Jarman, Sam Richardson

Guest: Kelly Sather, constituency assistant to Pam McConnell

Regrets: Marc Simmons, Shawna Pereira, Tyler Fleming

Review of October minutes: minutes: Motion to approve by Phil Frei, seconded by Carolyn Jarman, and carried.

HOLIDAY CARDS and CONTEST

Kelley Teahen reported that volunteer Lindsay Matheson was moving forward with the Holiday Card competition and that Kelley would be assisting her. The group saw two samples from previous years: a postcard version and a fold-over style. The directors agreed that the fold-over style, although more expensive to print, would allow the board go add a "call to action" to join the CRA on the back of the card. Graphic designer and resident Chris Moorehead has volunteered to design the cards once the four winning entries are selected from Sprucecourt P.S. and Winchester P.S. Kelley also reported that three area artists have volunteered to be judges: Doug Pantan, Sylvie Daigneault, and Michael Cavanagh. Phil Frei will supply the contact for the delivery/distribution service the CRA has used in past years.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS CONTEST

Keith Lawrance reported that the online polling site, created by Tyler Fleming, is completed and will go live on Dec. 16. Tyler has proposed running the contest until January 9, promoted through social media channels and the website. People submit their photos either by emailing them to info@cabbagetowner.com or tagging them #cabbagetownlights on facebook or twitter. The photos will then be manually compiled onto the voting site. In order to not over-advantage those who submit early, people will be allowed to change their votes.

The board discussed the timelines for the contest and several directors felt the Jan. 9 deadline was too late – Keith agreed to discuss this with Tyler, who was not able to attend the board meeting, proposing an adjusted closing date of Dec. 24 or 26, with winners then announced immediately so residents could be encouraged to go for walks during the holidays to see the winning displays.

BIKE SHARE TORONTO RIVERDALE PARK WEST – POLL RESULTS

One resident complained to City Councillor Pam McConnell that the Bike Share stand located along the north edge of Riverdale Park West was an eyesore and incongruous with the park and nearby heritage buildings. The individual sought the support for this campaign from the CRA and from the Cabbagetown Preservation Association, and both association boards did not agree with his contention this should be moved. In order to better gauge wider opinion on this question, the CRA set up an online poll asking if residents wanted the Bike Share to be moved to an alternate location. As of this board meeting, there were 332 respondents, 95 per cent of which supported leaving the bike share where it currently is located. Kelly Sather, an attendee at this meeting, said she would ensure the councillor's office receives this feedback.

KELLY SATHER REPORT FROM CITY HALL

Kelly provided briefs on the following subjects; details of her report are in Appendix A.

- Laurier Street overhead Christmas lights
- Illegal tree removal on Metcalfe Street
- Proposal to extend liquor licence hours to 4 a.m. in Toronto
- Toronto Community Housing properties in Cabbagetown

FUNDING REQUEST FROM REGENT PARK MUSEUM

President Phil Frei received a request for funding from the Regent Park Museum. It is moving location and, for a period of time, will not have a physical set-up so they wish to build up their web presence and have requested funding from the CRA and Cabbagetown Preservation Association to create a \$4,000 to \$5,000 budget for this project.

Discussion ensued and the board directors concluded that history and preservation are not the main goals of the CRA; Keith Lawrance, who currently runs the CRA's website, offered to meet with museum volunteers to assist them in getting their website set up. Phil pointed out that this request should prompt the CRA to hold a bigger discussion to set out what kind of projects the association should support monetarily.

PUMPKIN WALK DEBRIEF

James Wood, lead organizer of the walk, said he was surprised at the growth and positive results – 347 pumpkins were brought to the park and feedback from residents enjoying the evening was enthusiastic. He says key to this success was a combination of mild, clear weather for Nov. 1, plus a concerted effort to get out Oct. 31 and encourage those with Hallowe'en displays to bring their jack o'lanterns the next day to Riverdale Park West. Park Snacks stayed open into the evening to sell food and drinks.

The directors brainstormed on ways the event could be improved / grown in years ahead.

- Tina Card suggested that, instead of handing out candy (given that most kids are already "candied out"), the group buy inexpensive glow sticks to hand out. A few parents brought along glow sticks and those children had a marvellous time running around the dark park.
- Sam Richardson suggested that, prior to next year's walk, a volunteer assess where on the paths are the darkest parts (away from bright overhead path lights) and plan to place the jack o'lanterns first in those areas.
- Kelley Teahen suggested that, next year, one board director forego the Cabbagetown pumpkin walk to check out the one in Sorauran Park in west Toronto, which was the first one in the city and now attracts up to 2,000 pumpkins (and their donors). What do they do? Anything for the CRA to glean?

SECURITY INITIATIVES

Phil reported that volunteer Des Ryan is working on three projects.

- A few residents have volunteered to have their properties assessed by Ryan, who will then use this as case studies / examples of how to make properties more secure (for instance, how to more securely store bicycles in a backyard.)
- He is writing an article on how to avoid holiday thefts, which will be published on the website and promoted through social media.
- He has requested statistics on crimes in Cabbagetown from the Toronto Police and, once those are received, will analyze them to see if the information can point to further crime prevention and security improvement projects.

WINCHESTER PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

James Wood attended on behalf of CRA and reported back on their membership success, an update on the Winchester Street rooming houses, and WPRA's plans for celebrating Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017.

Membership: the group has 1,200 members, a very large number given the association was moribund for years and only has rebooted in the past two years. The numbers are driven by the

following factors: Two large groups – the Star Condominium on Wellesley and the Hugh Garner Co-op on Ontario Street have joined the association en masse, in exchange for having an ex officio representative on the association’s board. As well, parents from Winchester Park P.S. concerned about the Winchester rooming house issues have also signed on to receive the newsletter, which is counted as membership. The WPRRA does not charge a fee to join.

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation owns properties at 13, 15, 17 and 19 Winchester, which have been the scene of violence, drug dealing and other disruptive and dangerous activities. A plan is now in place for these properties to move over to management by Margaret’s House, which will continue to provide affordable housing spaces in the community but it will be more secure, with live-in staff and programs for women with addiction and mental health issues. Current residents under TCHC are being moved to other accommodations and the houses eventually emptied out, at which time Margaret’s House will undertake a renovation of the properties in 2018 and plan is to re-open in 2019.

The WPRRA, at the meeting, acknowledged it has focused solely on lobbying and safety/security issues, and agreed it wanted to provide a community-building activity for 2017. The group is going to run a Strawberry Festival in or around July 1 to celebrate Canada’s 150th birthday.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Marc Simmons could not attend the meeting so there was no report this month.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The group had moved to a Jan. 1 “renewal for all” annual membership but, in practice, the detractions have outweighed the benefits and Keith Lawrance has gone into the membership files and set up rolling renewals for membership. (For instance, every year many people think to join or renew around the June annual meeting). However, because of the previous actions, 161 current memberships expire on Jan. 1, 2017.

Strategies discussed for improving our engagement and getting more members:

- Adding a call-to-action to join to the holiday cards, being delivered to 1,300 households in the CRA boundaries
- Creating welcome package / outreach through realtors to newcomers from Cabbagetown; Tina Card will report on this initiative at the next meeting
- Special email to expired members, with a “we want you back, we need you back and here’s why” theme: Phil suggested we should focus our message on what we have accomplished in the past year (increasing street parking, connecting closely to the City Councillor’s office, run events, provide bags for shoppers at the Cabbagetown Festival yard sales).
- Sam Richardson says he will be meeting with Veronique Tomaszewski, who had a list of suggestions for improving engagement that she presented at the 2016 AGM.
- Kelley suggested we should first embrace Veronique’s idea of “street captains” – would expand our volunteer base and connect smaller groups of residents to the larger association.
- James said one of the issues the CRA has is one of branding – “we need to brag a lot more.” There is confusion because of the CRA, Cabbagetown Preservation Association, Cabbagetown BIA – no-one is certain who does what or assumes these are all the same thing. People think they have a membership in the CRA when in fact they have joined the CPA, or do something associated with the Cabbagetown Festival (which is a BIA project).

ADJOURNMENT at 9:20 p.m.
Keith Lawrance moved and Carolyn Jarman seconded.

APPENDIX 1:
Issues report from Kelly Sather, constituency assistant to Pam McConnell

Laurier Street overhead Christmas lights

Residents on Laurier Street, a one-block street north of Wellesley, went together to string white Christmas lights over the street but were ordered by the city to remove them, much to the residents' anger. Sather said such lights create a "massive liability issue" and encroach on the right of way. When BIAs or businesses string such lights, they enter into an agreement with the city and also have insurance in place; if residents on a street wanted to do the same, they would need to start the approval process months in advance and Sather said the cost for the insurance could prove prohibitive. "I feel very Grinch-like," Sather said, "but we live in a litigious society."

Illegal tree removal on Metcalfe Street

A resident on Metcalfe Street attempted to take down a tree that is protected under Urban Forestry rules and the resident was issued with a "cease and desist" order, but neighbours worry the tree is already damaged to the point where it will not survive. Sather says this individual remains on the radar of supervisory staff. Residents are supposed to apply to Urban Forestry for permission to remove trees from the front of property that form part of the city's urban canopy and the No. 1 reason cited for getting rid of trees is that they "drop stuff," leaving sticky residue on vehicles.

Proposal to extend liquor licence hours to 4 a.m. in Toronto

The councillor's office believes "there is no appetite" for this change in Toronto and predicts such an extension, or even a serious discussion about it, is "a long ways away."

Toronto Community Housing properties in Cabbagetown

Following the agreement to transfer the affordable housing spaces on Winchester Street from TCHC rooming houses to residential programs run by Margaret's House, Sather reports the city is looking closely at the other TCHC rooming houses on Parliament and Wellesley Streets in Cabbagetown. The city has a severe shortage of affordable housing units so the commitment remains that these properties must continue to provide affordable housing, but people with mental health and addiction issues are not served well through the rooming house model. Partnerships are being explored to have such rooming houses converted to supported housing.