

## CABBAGETOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

Date: Sept. 27, 2016

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Local Gest, Parliament Street

Directors in Attendance: Phil Frei, Marc Simmons, Keith Lawrance, Kelley Teahen, Tina Card, Carolyn Jarman, Sam Richardson, Shawna Pereira

Guest: Kelly Sather, constituency assistant to Pam McConnell

Regrets: Tyler Fleming, James Wood, Evelyn Sommers

---

Review of August minutes: minutes: Motion to approve by Keith Lawrance, seconded by Carolyn Jarman, and carried.

### CABBAGETOWN FESTIVAL BAGS/MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Sam Richardson reported that the bags were successfully distributed and all on the board reported positive feedback from residents holding garage sales during the festival who were given branded CRA paper bags to use for their sales. Phil Frei said it was a “great touch point and we had very nice interaction.” However, the 1,200 bags distributed netted only 18 emails from residents who were non-members and two new paid memberships, which Sam called “lousy ROI” (return on investment).

There are enough bags to do a second distribution during the 2017 Festival and Sam proposes looking for a commercial partner – perhaps a local realtor – to put their decal on the other side of the remaining bags to defray the expense to the association.

Discussion turned to making membership and membership renewals easier – many residents join and then lose track of renewing. Sam suggested setting up an auto renewal system and Keith said he would explore those possibilities within Stripe, the association’s online payment system. Kelley Teahen raised the concern that people should have the ability to opt out of ongoing yearly renewals.

Other membership strategies discussed:

- A targeted email in November to expired members with a “we want you back!” tone and making the case why membership support is important
- Tina Card will lead exploration of setting up new resident welcome packages from CRA, working with realtors. Tina will report on her progress at the next board meeting, including thoughts on reaching renters who may not be going through realtors.
- Keith has copies of a previous folder of information used as a welcome and promised to get that to Tina. Ideas discussed included
  - Welcome letter or brochure explaining who we are and what we do
  - To clear confusion, let people know about the other associations in area (BIA, CPA, etc.)
  - Some token – cabbage recipe; small cabbage or plant.

### COMMUNICATIONS and ISSUES

Keith has been running online polls on issues: Car2Go parking on city streets; new larger green waste bins; Airbnb rentals. The results of those will help shape the association’s position on these issues and provide feedback for city council.

Kelly Sather from Councillor McConnell’s office gave a detailed briefing on these and other issues for the city, a summary of which is attached as APPENDIX 1 to these board meetings.

The CRA Twitter feed now has 1,500 followers, three-quarters of whom are legitimate accounts. In the past month, Keith as the volunteer manager of the feed produced 153 tweets with 83 retweets and mentions that create conversations among the CRA online community.

He let the board know that this would be his last year as a director and he wants to create a volunteer pool to handle the social media feeds and other communications tasks (responding to [info@cabbagetowner.com](mailto:info@cabbagetowner.com), creating and sending the newsletter, updating the website) so there is a smooth transition and no one person carries the full burden. At this time, Keith also manages the majority of the time-consuming work around membership and records. Shawna Pereira volunteered to monitor and post on the Facebook feed. Kelley Teahen volunteered to reach out to frequent Twitter users who write about Cabbagetown to see if any would be interested in helping.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Currently the CRA has 567 active contacts (receiving newsletter) and saw an increase in activity in crime alerts driven by a recent spate of bicycle thefts. The website top traffic included news about those thefts along with stories about new businesses opening on Parliament Street.

Kelly Sather added that there has been a noted increase in bicycle thefts across Toronto driven by what city hall is calling a “drug use crisis” in the city. Bicycles are stolen to sell or being used as delivery vehicles and then abandoned. She asked the association to promote the “toxic taxi” – city residents can report finding a needle or other drug paraphernalia by calling 311 or filling in an online form. Carefully put the items in an envelope or other container it will be picked up and disposed of safely.

Phil noted that Des Ryan, a retired police officer, has offered to be a safety and security lead volunteer for the CRA and wants to set up an initial project with him – perhaps to educate residents about how to make their properties more secure.

## FORSYTHIA FESTIVAL

Carolyn Jarman has agreed to work with Shawna Pereira as leads on the festival organization; they have already met to review “the bible”, the operations manual for the festival compiled by former board director Trish Finkelstein. Shawna would like to add more activities and reported that some acts are already booked for the first week of May. The bulk of the permits and paperwork with the city need to be filed in January. Sam asked the directors to think about opportunities we might have to drive memberships through the parade and festival.

## PUMPKIN WALK

James Wood has taken care of the required permits and arranged for the city organic waste bin. He is going to use Sam Richardson’s mapping of the neighbourhood to organize distribution of the awareness leaflets over Sunday Oct. 30 and Monday Oct. 31 afternoon, when people are setting up their Hallowe’en displays. Kelley Teahen will send out an event invite to all the directors to book them to attend the Pumpkin Walk. Carolyn Jarman is shadowing James this year as this is also his last year as a director. Last year’s large turnout was facilitated by the fact it was on a weekend and the weather was mild; bad weather and the fact Nov. 1 this year is on a Tuesday may affect the number jack o’lanterns that arrive and how many people come to view. Earlier plans about getting Park Snacks to stay open on Nov. 1 and handing out coupons for hot cider or hot chocolate have been set aside although James said there will be candy to hand out and children are encouraged to wear their costumes again.

## TREASURER REPORT

The association currently has two bank accounts and a dormant PayPal account with a small amount of money in it. Given the switch to Stripe as the online payment method, the board agreed the PayPal account should be emptied and closed and agreed with treasurer Marc Simmons’ request to consolidate the TD and Tangerine accounts into one (at TD) for simpler accounting.

He also reported that the association has had continuing difficulties with its Form 1 application (a yearly filing of board officers and directors to the province) but that some noted problems have been fixed and submission resent.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kelley Teahen has undertaken a detailed review of what paper records she has in her possession, inherited from previous volunteers in this role. There are also some recent records stored on a Google Drive accessed through the association's email, [info@cabbagetowner.com](mailto:info@cabbagetowner.com) (which is a front for a gmail address.) The paper records were well kept between 2005 and 2012 and largely cease after that. There are sporadic files from earlier years.

The board approved the secretary's request to send the paper records out for scanning: after researching several options, Kelley recommended engaging Hybrid Document Systems in Mississauga to do the project, who will pick up and deliver documents to be scanned, come highly recommended, and estimate the project cost to be \$500 plus tax. She will organize the existing Google Drive files and set up a filing protocol with main folders being topics and subfolders being organized by year or by subtopics. Once the digital files return, she will load them into their proper places and set up a standard naming convention for all files to make them easy for future board directors to reference. She also will reach out to previous president Steve de Blois to see if he and other volunteers from 2013 and 2014 have electronic files of documents on their personal computers that can be copied for posterity onto the central drive and finally recommend the best way to back up the Google Drive for archival purposes. Once finished, the only historical paper records the secretary will be required to safeguard will be the original Letters Patent and its amendment (to change the association's name in 2004). The rest – paper printouts of reports, minutes, surveys, newsletters – can be recycled.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:42 p.m.  
Sam Richardson moved and Marc Simmons seconded.

---

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

### AIRBNB

Bleecker Street residents, working with the newly revived Winchester Park Residents Association, have reported on an absentee landlord who has bought several homes there and has operated them as an Airbnb with no onsite host (coded entry, cleaning staff turns over space). This was covered as an issues story in the Toronto Star in August: <https://www.thestar.com/business/2016/08/04/a-neighbourhood-pushes-back-against-short-term-rentals.html>

Similar issues are cropping up all around Toronto and the Licensing and Standards Committee has asked city staff to work out a framework to govern these home short-term rentals "in the next few months." Currently, these rentals are not illegal so are not governed beyond neighbours making noise complaints or reporting other standard infractions. This is "like the Uber issue" – a product of the sharing economy but then also grows into further, larger-scale commercialization. The city loses revenue it might have had through licensed B&Bs or hotels. New York, for instance, has outright banned Airbnb-style rentals.

Councillor McConnell is looking for feedback from a wide variety of residents: right now, the councillors are hearing from those most negatively affected by Airbnb operations (such as Bleecker Street).

### CAR2GO STREET PARKING

The company has a "dismissive attitude" to parking regulations: Customers are told to leave the car on the street once they have finished their rental and the company picks up any parking fines that ensue prior to the next renter; some Cabbagetown residents (and others in Toronto) are annoyed that a commercial enterprise is taking up street spaces that are for residents with permits. The flip side: the Car2Go renters who leave the cars are also Cabbagetown residents. The city does have a "three strikes" rule around ticketing: after three tickets, a vehicle can then be towed so there is a crackdown on monitoring parking tickets by plate. Rob Mackey is area supervisor for parking enforcement in a zone including Cabbagetown. Technically, unless otherwise signed, all street parking has a three-hour limit but enforcement of that is on a complaints basis.

### GREEN BIN CHANGES

Cabbagetown South along Ontario Street is part of a pilot project testing the new green bins, which are larger (taller), easier to empty for collectors as they are standardized to other bins and supposedly raccoon-open-proof. However, in small urban yards, the larger size is difficult to accommodate and also the weight of compost material is significant and harder to manage in a larger size. Councillors are looking for feedback on the change.

### WINCHESTER STREET ROOMING HOUSES

Toronto Community Housing is still working through legal issues but the intention is for Margaret's House, a residential program for women with mental health issues, to take over management of the four TCH properties on the south side of Winchester between Rose and Ontario. Kelly has visited Margaret's House existing properties on Broadview and calls them an "awesome partner." There will be major renovations once alternate accommodation is found for existing residents, but it is not immediate. There will be city and federal funding for the fix up.

### OTHER TCH PROPERTIES

Renovations are nearing completion for a home on Aberdeen damaged by fire, which will now accommodate two families.

The green-and-purple rooming house on Parliament Street south of Winchester is "on the city's radar", as are a set of TCH properties north of the Beer Store on Parliament.

There is a growing realization that TCH is not a fit landlord for people with mental health and addiction issues, Kelly says, as they are taken advantage of by criminal elements.

### OTHER ROOMING HOUSES (not TCH)

The city does have authority to fix derelict properties and charge the owner through tax bill: recently the city replaced a roof on an abandoned property at 24 Gifford Street. Kelly noted there are several properties being run as rooming houses by one owner in Cabbagetown that are in bad condition but the city only intervenes when properties fall below health and safety standards.

### WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

This does not affect the neighbourhood defined by the CRA boundaries; however, draft boundaries would divide Regent Park and there are arguments being made to keep that as one contiguous neighbourhood. (proposed new ward division would be set along Dundas Street).

### DEVELOPER SECTION 37 LEVIES

- Development at Wellesley and Sherbourne: Section 37 funding will result in a new indoor pool being constructed similar to the one developed for Regent Park.

### ANNIVERSARY PARK

There is movement on a long-standing plan on the books to revamp Anniversary Park, a small triangle at Gerrard and Parliament. Plans include closing the turning lane west off Parliament and creating a traditional four-point intersection at Gerrard/Parliament, filling in the turning lane to create additional park space and reconfiguring the park to encourage more community use and less vagrancy. Kelly promised that a CRA representative would be included in upcoming meetings on the project.