

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES

October 16, 2007
Kensington Gardens 7 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chair Gus Sinclair, who welcomed all to the meeting. Approximately 60 area residents were in attendance.

Copies of the minutes of the 2006 AGM were made available.

The Agenda was changed to move item #5 to position #4, and to add #7, the Nomination and election of the HVRA U of T representative.

Area Caucuses: The meeting broke into the Area Caucuses for discussion of local issues, with the following reported back to the entire group.

North East

Sandra DeAthe

Out-going rep Margaret Beare is being replaced by Jane Adams.

1. There is concern in the neighbourhood about 292 and 292A Robert Street, which may be empty. Garbage has not been put out properly and rats and many squirrels have been seen on the property. This may be a public health issue. There is also a dumpster in the back of 250 Major St., which is an eye-sore and attracts vermin.
2. The Robert Street field is an on-going concern and needs a big push from HVRA to be resolved, at least to open the rink. We need park and children's recreational space in the community and this is a resource that is not being used.
3. Cars are still going the wrong way down Sussex and Major, and some trucks still go the wrong way at the top of Robert despite the new traffic light.

South East

Tim Grant

Rep Leslie Thompson is moving to the position of HVRA Treasurer, and is being replaced as a rep by Wendy Duff

1. Noise in the neighbourhood, especially from the Comfort Zone.
2. There is a need to beautify the east side of the Kensington Health Centre at Major and College Streets.

3. People are shooting up drugs in public spaces.
4. There is increased traffic on Sussex Mews.
5. Trees – there are dead branches on (City) frontyard trees; sidewalk trees on College need watering.
6. Lack of parking on Major, south of Harbord.
7. Aggressive panhandling on College.
8. Homeless individuals sleeping on porches of Spadina residents.
9. Clothing being dumped in frontyard of 1 Major (presumably by homeless).

South Central

Richard Longley

Out-going rep Richard Longley is being replaced by Bachir Rabat

1. Residents are concerned about the condition of the Brunswick-College Parkette – especially its squalor and its use as a base and dormitory by panhandlers, drinkers, and drug users. Fears are that promised improvements subsequent to an October 3rd meeting with authorities will be inadequate.
2. Concern was raised by many present re the ‘bad behaviour’ of Central Tech kids in our neighbourhood during the day; littering Margaret Fairley Park at lunch time; smoking dope; drinking alcohol; and, urinating in the alley between Brunswick and Borden. Opinion is divided between those who would let kids be kids until the behaviour is truly menacing, and those who would call the police and involve the Central Tech principal.
3. One resident wondered who gave permission to Kensington Health Centre to erect a large sign at the corner of Brunswick and College – on City property. According to Richard Longley, the Health Centre obtained the required permit; the object is an eyesore, however it was decided to leave discussion of the sign until after work is completed on the Parkette, for which we need KHC support.
4. Concern was raised about the welfare of the white haired gentleman who frequents the neighbourhood and regularly sleeps on a bench in Margaret Fairley Park. It was suggested that one of the residents with a background in social issues might explore the situation.

South West

Michael Heydon

Out-going rep Michael Heydon is being replaced by Colin Furness

1. 60 Borden Street – Noise is starting up again, all day yelling outside on the patio. Residents can hear from across the street with their windows closed. Shirley Yanover will write to management, Habitat and the Councillor's office. If she gets no results, she'll have to ask the HVRA to help mediate.
2. Excessively large patios on College Street illegally infringing on public space. Enforcement would help, before the patios are erected in the spring.
3. Postering on lampposts. Freedom of expression is one thing, but advertising should not be acceptable.
4. Watering trees on College Street. Setting up an adopt-a-tree program might be something the HVRA could do.

North West

David Booz

Out-going rep Jane Auster is being replaced by Samiha Sayed

1. There is trash all around the big trash bin at the north end of Central Tech, and damage to the retaining wall at Central Tech.
2. Is there a potential for garbage pickup and snow plowing in the laneways?
3. There is wrong way traffic on Borden Street.
4. Concern about the increased raccoon population.
5. A report on the activities of the Bloor-Annex BIA indicates the following:
 - They did a safety audit, which resulted in the following improvements:
 - Paving the lane parallel to Bloor Street
 - Fixing the trap door at Lee's Palace
 - Improving the lighting in the alley (Don from Curbside Cycle is helping with this)
 - They want to name the laneway parallel to Bloor Street (and all the laneways), because that makes it easier for emergency vehicles and the general tone. Suggestions would be welcome.
 - Graffiti eradication – Marty Weiner from Weiner's Home Hardware is participating in the graffiti eradication program by providing paint at an attractive price.
 - Bloor Visioning Study – Andrew is on the local committee for the Bloor Visioning Study.
 - The BIA has been actively courting 14 Division, asking them to have their bicycle cops around the area for the first few weeks of the school year, to set a certain tone for the students. This seems to work very well.

HVRA Neighborhood Builder Award

The recipient of the award this year is Carmen Gauthier from Robert Street. Congratulations and thanks to Carmen for her much appreciated hard work were extended by Gus Sinclair on behalf of the neighbourhood.

HVRA Business

Committee Reports

University of Toronto

Sue Dexter

Sue reported on the development of the Law School on Philosopher's walk; and, the return of the debate over the land south of the ROM and the use of public lands for private ownership as a condo tower.

The Bloor Visioning Committee meeting is December 12th, where the planning report for the Bloor Corridor from Avenue Road to Bathurst will be unveiled. Issues such as building heights, pedestrian friendly streets, more trees, and an environmentally responsible neighbourhood will be discussed.

College Street

Bob Stambula

Work is continuing on the clearway concept to have public space ensured. Any new sidewalk is currently taken over by patios.

Solar Initiative

David Booz

There is a report in the latest Harbord Village Newsletter on the solar projects. To date 7 hot water units have been installed, and there are 5 more signed contracts, and 6 houses have installed on-demand water heaters. The vendor has applied to the government for credit for the purchasers.

There are some issues with the photovoltaic connection to the grid; everyone is still in learning mode. However, not as many units have been installed as hoped.

Treeing the City

Tim Grant

Tim recognized the extensive contribution of the volunteers on the Tree Inventory project. Their collective efforts made the project possible. 60 details per tree were collected for several hundred trees.

Julie Kelly, a grad student from U of T Forestry, gave a presentation of the findings from the project. Her role was to coordinate and encourage the volunteers and to take the data and pull together the report.

Major findings:

- 50% of the neighbourhood trees were inventoried, i.e. 2,000 trees approximately. A map will be on the web site; will be able to zoom in to see the individual tree, and get information on the species, the condition, and other data about each tree inventoried.
- 56% of these are of 10 species, such as maples, white cedar, lilacs, honey locust
- 49% belong to the City, 43% are private trees, and 8% belong to schools
- 77% are deciduous
- 61% are in excellent condition, 13% in poor or very poor condition (mostly maples).
The condition of this 13% of our trees should be taken in account when planning trees for the neighbourhood – those in poor condition should have attention or be replaced.

Questions after the presentation revealed the following additional information:

- Dangerous trees are identified in the survey as poor or very poor condition, and the more detailed data identify what is wrong with it, e.g., big dead branch
- Only an arborist can decide if a tree is salvageable.
- The condition of each tree can be tracked because we now have a baseline.
- Those with poor trees expressed frustration with trying to get hold of the City. Is this data going to the City? No, there is no organized way of giving this info to the City right now; the City is overwhelmed – they are 2 years behind in tree work now.

Fall Fair

Gus Sinclair

Costs of the Fall Fair are much higher now that we have to hire an off-duty police officer; nonetheless, we made almost \$1,700 this year.

Graffiti

Michael Heydon

Croft Street has been transformed with murals and painting.

Heritage Conservation Districts

Gus Sinclair

We are nearly there with the second project on Robert Street. In the next 6-8 weeks there will be a public meeting to review the results to date.

Treasurer's Report

Gus Sinclair, on behalf of John Pham

We have just under \$16,000 in the bank. The major expenses this year were the web site development, and the costs associated with the completion of the House Inventory, which gives a snapshot of the built form of Harbord Village.

Cyril Greenland moved the Treasurer's report be accepted, seconded by Margaret Beare, and carried.

Constitution and Nominations Committee for 2007-2008

The Chair presented the slate for the committee:

Convener:	Richard Longley (replacing Kathy Wurfel)
Member:	Jane Auster (replacing David Wurfel)
Member:	Susan Pfeifer (re-nominated)
Member:	Margaret Smith (re-nominated)
Member:	Celia Denov (re-nominated)

Moved by Jeanie Hastie and seconded by David DePoe, that nominations be closed
The motion was put and accepted unanimously. The slate was therefore declared elected by acclamation

University of Toronto Representative 2007-2008

Sue Dexter currently holds the position for 2006-2007. Moved by Margaret Smith and seconded by Richard Longley, that Sue continues in this position. Carried.

Slate of Officers for 2007-2008

Richard Longley took the Chair and presented the slate of officers:

Chair:	Rory 'Gus' Sinclair
Secretary:	Eva Janecek
Treasurer:	Leslie Thompson
Membership Secretary:	Katrina McHugh

Moved by Jeanie Hastie and seconded by David DePoe, the slate was accepted without changes. Gus Sinclair re-assumed the Chair.

Adam Vaughan

8:15

Adam gave an update on various community issues.

- Efforts to curtail the noise and disruption coming from the night clubs in the area, which are very skilled at skirting the rules, e.g., bar/patios on Brunswick; the Transac

Club; Labyrinth. (Some clubs transfer ownership, which wipes the slate clean of all investigation work.)

- There are very, very preliminary ideas to develop the Dominion Store site at the top of Robert Street with 2 condo towers. Community consultations are needed – what does the neighbourhood want change to look like?
- City-wide
 - Green roof initiative – caught up in cost cutting. If the tax is passed, there is \$50/sq.ft. for residential conversion
 - Libraries – Adam is now on the Toronto Public Library Board
- Section 37 agreements
 - Heritage Conservation Districts should be in place before Part II Plans are produced and financed. HCD is more accountable and responsive to community need.
- Green P next to Dooney's – being explored by the City as underground parking, with a park and new housing, and to mask the back of buildings on Bloor
- Kensington Market – 3 developers are looking at a courtyard development; using historical designs within the Part II Plan

Special Topic *Raising taxes versus cutting services: The City's financial future.*

Motion: **"that the Harbord Village Residents' Association would prefer, after all other avenues have been fully explored, that the city uses its new powers of taxation to raise revenue rather than make substantial reductions to public services."**

Gus read the issue and motion to the meeting, and explained that the Board needs feedback from the AGM meeting on the question. Either raising taxes or cutting services impacts residents, especially older residents or those on fixed incomes. Questions were addressed to Adam from the floor.

1. Will businesses be taxed as well as residents?
A little bit, yes. Some allowance granted to the City from the Province; but taxation still primarily of residents. Downtown will be disproportionately hit as the tax cap comes off.
2. Should we re-consider this shift away from business to residents?
Toronto is a unique tax environment. Move to 905 tax style is a Provincial mandate.
3. Are seniors able to defer part of the taxes?
There is a City program for seniors to defer taxes.

4. There was a survey in the '80s concerning raising taxes or reducing services. Is the survey still being done?

No. Downtown has no problem raising taxes; the outer ring has the problem with tax increases.

Comment from the floor: The City should find new ways to tax, not just property taxes. Get 905 commuters to contribute taxes to their use of City services. We should broaden ways to get taxes.

The City needs to diversify its methods of taxation; old homes vs. new homes; less tax for less garbage; split off water bills; land transfer tax acts as a pressure valve to property taxes in that it allows people to decide the amount of payment at a time when people have liquidity in resources. We need to broaden the tax base and reduce the pain, and draw on others who consume and don't pay taxes, e.g., commuters who use Toronto subsidized TTC. There are 10-15 Councillors who are the 'nervous middle' who want to cut services and reduce taxes.

5. Can the land transfer tax be paid by the seller, not the purchaser?

No, there is a system/process already in place.

6. Can we tax cars coming into the City?

The Mayor sent to Regional Transportation Authority for a tolling plan. A license may be required to park in the City, with one car free to residents is in the works, but not possible to have in place for this year.

7. What will Adam Vaughan do with the results of the meeting and any vote we take?

How to use a cross-section of views of constituents is the art of politics. In his campaign, he said the tax system needed fixing to sustain public services.

After some discussion, the meeting voted on the following question:

Should the original question (as above) be put to the meeting?

Moved by Richard Longley, seconded by Jane Auster. Carried in the affirmative.

The original question was put to the meeting, and carried as worded.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.