

Harbord Village Residents' Association Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 18, 2015, 7pm, Kensington Gardens
Minutes

In attendance: Tim Grant, , Gus Sinclair, Carmen Gauthier, Carlo Drudi, Bob Stambula, Christian Mueller, Margaret Procter, Steve Klein, Paula Gallo, Jane Perdue, Carolee Orme, Gail Misra, Marilyn Martin, Eva Janecek.

Regrets: Sue Dexter, James Murdoch, Caroline Macfarlane

1. Chairs welcome extended to all, especially guests Kahlin Holmes and Raymond Ngu from councilor Cressy's office, and Patricia Chisholm.

2. Approval of the agenda.

Moved by Gail Misra, seconded by Gus Sinclair. Approved with addition presentation of Harbord Village Green Plan 2015 under Discussion and Harvest kitchen & insurance under new business.

3. Approval of the minutes

July 21, 2015 meeting moved by Carmen Gauthier, seconded by Carolee Orme. Approved.

4. Discussion items

a. Presentation

Kahlin Holmes, a planning student, presented highlights of Harbord Village Green Plan 2015 that was done in consultation with HVRA and BIA representatives as a courtesy of Councillor Cressy's office. Kahlin distributed a copy of a draft report and pointed out that the purpose of this project is to have a plan for greening Harbord Village. It is to be presented to the City so that the Works department can be included with greening initiatives.

The goal of greening is to reduce heat island impact, restoring ecosystem health and improving quality of air in the city. The report lists existing green areas and their strengths and weaknesses.

Kahlin asked the members to send her comments and suggestions to finalize her report.

After a short discussion of the report Tim Grant moved that:

HVRA expresses its sincere appreciation to Councilor Cressy's office and Kahlin Holmes in particular for developing the Harbord Village Green Plan 2015 and look forward to working with councilor Cressy's office on its implementation.

Seconded by Steve Klein

b. Topics or speakers we might invite to address our Fall AGM on Wednesday, October 21, 2015.

The suggested topics were:

- Kahlin Holmes presenting the Harbord Village Green Plan 2015
- Noise by-laws and enforcement
- Complete streets
- Development

After a discussion it was decided that the subject of noise by-laws and enforcement be accepted (Bob Stambula agreed to find a speaker) and Complete streets (Carolee Orme agreed to find a speaker).

c. Organize a federal debate, and if so when?

Rory Gus Sinclair reported that Bloor St. United Church, Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Bathurst Street United Church are interested in co-sponsoring with neighbouring residents' associations a debate with a focus on social justice and poverty concerns. He was asked to be a moderator. Gus proposed that HVRA support their proposal, broaden the focus, but allow reps from the 3 churches to ask the first 3 questions. Marilyn Martin seconded. Agreed.

d. Neighbourhood renovation issues

Marilyn reported that many neighbours come to her with concerns about renovations. Members acknowledged Marilyn's desire to help and suggested that she refer the people to help provided by the City via 311.

5. Committee Reports

a) Treasurer's report - no report

b) Membership - no report

c) Community liaison - there will be a meeting at Councillor Cressy's office on Aug 19th regarding the Spadina-Sussex project. Two designs – one with and one without the City's lane.

Sue Dexter was at a meeting re 316 Bloor St. W. on Aug.18th.

d) Zoning – no report

e) Communications – Tim thanked Carlo Drudi for doing a great job on the last Newsletter and his willingness to be the lead on the October newsletter.

Many topics were suggested and members volunteered to write articles and provide pictures. Carlo will email a list with timelines.

f) Website – Margaret Procter reported that a group of people is going to meet to discuss "website renovation". It was decided that we need a less complicated website than the one we have. Steve Klein contacted vendors and his report is at the end of the minutes. Colin Furness, a former board member offered his assistance as did Caroline Macfarlane.

g) U of T liaison – no report

i) Heritage – no report

j) Flowerpots – Marilyn Martin reported that the businesses along Harbord have not been watering the planters sufficiently.

k) Gardeners – Margaret Procter reported that several people noted that plants were stolen from the concrete planters at pinch points. The Gardeners group would like to have a table at the Fall Fair.

I) Fall fair – Tim Grant and Carolee Orme reported that more people are asking for tables at the Fair. This time the tables will be delivered and picked up, saving a lot of volunteer manpower. Plans for musicians are well on the way. Paula Gallo and Marilyn Martin and three other volunteers are soliciting for donations for the silent auction. Gail Misra agreed to organize volunteers for the membership table. It was agreed to order HVRA T-shirts for kids. Gus Sinclair agreed to look after it.

6. New business.

I. Rory Gus reported that he is meeting with the owners of Harvest Kitchen restaurant in the morning on Aug 19th to deliver the message to the owners that they need to make changes to the noise level and the hours of operation immediately or there will be consequences. The residents who live in the vicinity have lost the use of their backyards and negotiations over several months were without results.

ii. Steve Klein reported that directors' liability insurance is now in place.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm

Moved by Steve Klein and seconded by Carlo Drudi

Harbord Village Residents' Association

Memo

To: HVRA Board

From: Steve Klein

Date: July 14, 2015

Re: HVRA Website – Designer Feedback

Preliminary

I asked 2 independent web designers to take a quick look at the current Harbord Village Residents' Association (HVRA) website with the sole purpose of providing some brief feedback and if possible provide us with some options on how to move forward.

Feedback

The consistent feedback is "it's a bit (lot) dated". "Stuck in the late 90's perhaps", with lots of newer materials and attempts to modernize with layers upon layers of code of content with very little user friendly consistency, logic or order in presentation.

Site design and architecture generally deemed to be "archaic", and a web developer would be hard pressed to work with the existing site to bring it to a more modern and user-friendly website without considerable effort and cost.

Recognizing the purpose of the website is to have a central repository of valuable information about Harbord Village where residents can readily keep abreast of events, community affairs, municipal insights, commercial and residential development, etc. This presently is not being achieved in an engaging and compelling manner.

Another key component, but not entirely serving its intended purpose, is to have a members' only area with a full e-commerce (i.e., at least e-payment) facility readily accessible and with ease of functionality.

Possible considerations

. One designer's stated preference is for a WordPress theme from StudioPress.com, as they are deemed to be safe and well developed. This designer suggested HVRA may want to check out <http://demo.studiopress.com/metro/> or else their library of themes...
<https://my.studiopress.com/themes/> .

- . Consider a magazine style theme as the community has news, press and events to share. Also, it looks like there are images to go with the stories so the magazine style theme might work best.
- . The other designer stated that whatever theme we ultimately decide on from Wordpress, we would need to ensure the server the site is on is compatible with Wordpress as there is a 'C-panel'.
- . An advantage of changing the look is the ability to reorganize content. Adding a top menu bar as well as right side columns on certain pages will ensure some information is always right at hand, such as logging in and signing up for newsletters.
- . Perhaps, instead of "what we are doing", consider turning this into a blog. Blogs can be tagged 'Events, Projects, Fund Raisers', etc....this way you can search past project more specifically and find current content more readily.
- . A 'right side menu bar' could hold the Login fields on internal pages as well as newsletter sign-up.
- . A top menu bar could hold frequently accessed pages such as Press | Events | Area Reps | Contacts Us, etc. |

Potential Costs

Neither designer had enough information right now to estimate costs. But one suggested the theme costs about US\$100 if you use StudioPress and the associated Genesis Framework. There are free ones as well. However, we'll need a developer to quote a price to not only do the website setup but to also migrate all this information over from one website to another. A co-op student for the latter aspect at least may be a way to keep the costs down.

Ancillary Information: The Genesis Framework (from the SstudioPress.com website)

Eight (8) Reasons to choose the Genesis Framework

1. Search Engine Optimization: state-of-the-art code and smart design architecture mean search engines see your content
2. Responsive HTML5 Designs, mobile compatible
3. Unlimited Everything: unlimited support, unlimited updates, unlimited websites—One low price entitle you to SUPPORT
4. Airtight Security – WP security best practices, and it will be secure
5. Instant Updates – update the code that runs in the background all while keeping the look and feel of your site just the way you want it
6. Customizable and Fast – make customizing site easy, but without bloated code that slows down the site
7. Widgets & Layout Options – custom widgets that can be used on any area of the site, and layout can be mixed-and-matched
8. Develops You Can Trust – "A list of talented, reliable designers who will knock one out of the park for you"

Addendum (update August 13, 2015)

In addition, I solicited feedback from 3 people in marketing communications; each stated the architecture is outdated, and the site overall was user "unfriendly". Here is the rest of their respective feedback:

- Top banner should link entirely to homepage (whole banner should be home button)
- Sidebar navigation is too clunky and cumbersome - Best practice: Contact us should be top right hand corner.
- Side Navigation: About Us/Current Projects/Calendar/News/Archives/Useful Links
- Member link and Newsletters should be separate buttons (persistent on right column)
- Carousel on home page with no more than 3 pieces of content. The rest should be archived in News section
- Consider 3 column layout
- Logo should be bigger and clearer
- Too much content
- No distinct logo for association and the name of the assoc. gets lost tucked away at the top
- Multiple fonts and colour usage make the page difficult to follow (shades of green/blue look washed out)
- Left and right hand columns challenge the user where to look for important information: should consolidate it
- You need to scroll down a lot to see the information: perhaps archive older content/use hyperlinks to link to news articles
- Way too much content on main page. Old content needs to be archived, i.e. Hot off the press Autumn 2014 newsletter
- Most important items should be visible without scrolling, i.e. calendar of events
- Home button is not visible