

Minutes of HVRA Board Meeting

January 16, 2007

Kensington Gardens

Board Present: Gus Sinclair, Sandra DeAthe, John Hong, Katrina McHugh, Tim Grant, Jane Auster, Leslie Thompson, Sue Dexter, Jane Purdue, David Booz, Richard Gilbert, Stuart Schoenfeld, Richard Longley, Michael Heydon, Margaret Beare

Guest: Adam Vaughan (8:35)

1. **Chair's Welcome:** The meeting commenced at 7:08 p.m.

2. **Agenda:** It was agreed that the agenda would be fluid due to Adam Vaughan's visit. A free ranging discussion ensued and some Committee reports were heard.

3. **Minutes:** Stuart Schoenfeld moved that the minutes of December 19, 2006 be accepted without change; seconded by Michael Heydon. Carried.

4. The Chair asked if the Board had any major priorities to discuss with Adam Vaughan. The following emerged:

By-law enforcement; noise (e.g., Comfort Zone), traffic and parking

Dealing with U of T and its expansion plans. The University plans to increase its enrollment by 25%; it has perpetrated demolition-by-neglect on some of its old buildings, and fought hard to free itself of its Part II plans that limits development; it wants to increase its liquidity by selling property. In essence the University wants to sell neighbourhoods without consulting with the neighbours. Our HVRA position is in support of a fair and open process by the University on its future, which includes consultation with the community.

i. How important is preserving the neighbourhood in the face of U of T encroachment?

ii. We need to let U of T know there is a vibrant, strong community here that cares. We have a voice and will say this through our Councillor.

We want assistance from Adam Vaughan to move forward with discussions with U of T: **Sue Dexter made the following motion, seconded by Jane Auster, and amended by Stuart Schoenfeld :**

"That the board of Harbord Village Resident's Association direct its liaison committee representatives to press the city and university convene a liaison committee meeting on the University of Toronto Growth Plan at the earliest possible time. That our position be informed by HVRA's interest in enhancing the quality of life in the neighbourhood and the city, and to that end, the university's plan should be part of a public consultative process; that we believe in the desirability of the preservation of the Huron-Sussex built form and the fair treatment by the University of Toronto of its tenants."

Carried unanimously. **(The University's plans will be at the top of the Agenda for discussion at our next meeting.)** The suggestion was made that David Naylor should come talk to us about U of T longer term plans. We need to tease out issues we agree on, and those we don't.

- Environmental issues - solar panels, trees
- Quality of City services - we have seen a huge deterioration; e.g., there is litter in the streets, roads need repairing Better resource planning is needed to begin to address the lack of attention to detail of the fabric of the City. The City looks scruffy and down at the heels.
- Taxes for services are OK; resources are needed for quality. We are appalled that the budget process will be secret for the first time in 30 years.
- Get the OMB out of Planning
- What has Adam Vaughan identified for our area?

6. Committee Reports

a. Environment

i. Trees Tim

Still waiting to hear from the Trillium Foundation - should hear by mid-February. The person selected to do a list of absentee landlords could start mid-February as the process at City Hall has been worked out.

ii. Solar David

There was a MURB (multi-unit residential buildings) meeting last week. Local residents were asked to talk to their councilors about locating a building for the solar project. There has been good response on assignments on the Solar Committee. Tim mentioned a solar share project that exists, wherein a residents can buy into a larger installation and get returns if they can't do their own panels.

The Gleaner is interested in covering the solar story. They will do a major feature piece when there is more to report. (Michael)

iii. Graffiti Michael

There has been a rash of new tags, even over murals.

b. Membership Katrina

At the next meeting Katrina will get input and call for a vote on membership fees. A general discussion on general policies will be held as well.

c. Community Liaison No report

d. College Street No report

e. Zoning Gus

Diane Silver has completed the housing inventory of the south side. We now need to have the data entered into a database; this will cost \$500. Moved by Richard Longley, seconded by Sandra DeAthe that \$500 be made available to enter the data gathered in a database. Carried.

f. Communication Richard G.

Some text is needed for the website development. Sue Dexter and Richard Longley were volunteered to write the Harbord Village neighbourhood page, including a description and history. Tim will do the environmental info, and David the solar. Minutes of all our meetings will be on the site. Hope to have the site up by late February.

g. U of T Liaison No report

Adam Vaughan arrived at 8:35 p.m., and started with an update of his activities.

- Having some success with flexibility in housing units in terms of configuration and size
- Environmental reporting is part of the building construction
- U of T's expansion plans are both aggressive and ambiguous; they are commercializing a lot of their properties.
- Demolition-by-neglect - there is a report coming forward on this topic. Under the Heritage Act, once an HCD is established, can enforce property standards on a heritage design building. The City would do the work and add the cost to the owner's tax bill.

Gus brought up the issue of the OMB, Adam had the following to say:

- It is now apparent that the planning process in Toronto is failing neighbourhoods, and that the OMB is a huge problem and so is the City planning. This has sparked an internal review of what's happened in Toronto, and may start more neighbourhood planning processes. Need to limit the OMB in planning, and the City needs to assume some authority.

- Unlike the City Plan, Part II plans for a neighbourhood are very detailed, and very prescriptive. Once a Part II plan is in place, the City can adjudicate within the plan, but the parties (residents and developers) can't go to the OMB
- Developers need to involve neighbourhoods as a first step.

Richard G. made the point that City services have deteriorated to the point where the City has started to look seedy. The budget for litter was \$20 million for the old City, and now with a much larger City, the budget is \$16 million.

Gus started the discussion of by-law enforcement and in particular illegal bars. Adam said that not a lot of people in the Ward are happy with the MLS activity. Also, Kensington market needs organization and the Chinatown BIA has just formed. **Adam asked that we track the working efficiency of his office, and let him know if there are problems.** His office will get the MLS people out there.

Examples of lack of effect of MLS activity:

- Labyrinth Lounge; vandalism of cars nearby, drug use
- Brunswick House (**Katrina will send to Adam the record of Brunswick House complaints**)

Adam said that police in Toronto don't do quality of life issues - i.e., enforcing social behaviour on the street, controlling hooliganism. It's time to look for some best practices; Calgary is one good example, where there are huge fines for hooliganism and drunk and disorderly.

Richard G. brought up the issue of raising taxes. Adam responded:

- Need new ways to create new streams of revenue from people who make bad choices (Hummer parking permits vs. Smart Cars, for example)
- Parcel taxes
- Charge frontage fee on unit value basis, not market value assessment
- Additional points on mill rate in areas on a temporary basis for improvements

While we felt that something needs to be done this year, Adam reported that the Mayor says only his platform issues will receive funding this year. If the councillors don't play ball, they will receive less than the standard funding.

Ward Office organization:

- Staffing is finalized in Adam's office, and everyone will be in place by the middle of March. He has divided the Ward into 3 sections, and assigned staff accordingly. There is also a Best Practices researcher. The Harbord Village contact is Stephanie Ford.
- Four Task Forces have been organized, with the following areas of responsibility:

1. Create consistent planning process across the Ward, and engage the neighbours right away in any development.
2. Resolve parking issues - look at best practices, pull a pan-Ward group together to create new policies, and address Green P parking lots

3. Alexander Park - reinvigorate
4. Equity Agenda across the Ward.

Gus asked Adam to call for an early Liaison Committee meeting with U of T.

Adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Next meeting February 20, 2007, same time, same place.