

Harbord Village Residents' Association Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 20, 2018, 7.00 pm

Kensington Gardens, 25 Brunswick Ave, Toronto, ON M5S 2L9

Final Minutes

In Attendance: Sue Dexter, Ann Eyerman, Anne Kerekes, Gail Misra, Lena Mortensen, Christian Mueller, Carolee Orme, Jane Perdue, Margaret Procter, Gus Sinclair, Robert Stambula, Merrill Swain

Regrets: Cathy Merkley, Andrea Poptsis, Regine Schmid, Nicole Schulman

Called to order at 7:01 pm

1. **Chair's Welcome.** Gail welcomed the members present and noted that we had quorum.
2. **Adoption of Agenda.** With some additional items added, Gus moved approval of the Agenda, seconded by Carolee; adopted.
3. **Approval of January Minutes.** No amendments suggested; Gus moved approval, seconded by Merrill; approved.
4. **Business Arising**

- a. **New Board member orientation** (continued from December meeting): Planning & Development (Sue)

The P&D Committee consists of Sue Dexter, Gail Misra, Carolee Orme, Gus Sinclair, and Bob Stambula; its email is development@harbordvillage.com.

Sue described the range of P&D activities, including both micro and macro issues. P&D deals with proposals for local Committee of Adjustment variances (sometimes as small as for replacing a garage), and also participates in large City planning studies such as the Bathurst-Bloor Four Corners Study and the Bloor Corridor Visioning Study; a study on Spadina is now active. P&D members Sue and Carolee also attend quarterly meetings of the U of T Liaison Committee at which discussions may include where U of T wants to revise city planning rules. HVRA works closely with neighbouring organizations such as the Annex Residents' Association on planning committees and working groups, sometimes writing joint letters and often serving as observers to learn from their discussions.

When cases go to mediation at OMB and TLAB, P&D work is confidential. Otherwise, Area Reps are important participants. For local CofA cases, as needed, Area Reps call together neighbours and meet with them, making use of P&D technical expertise in interpreting

planning documents. P&D as a committee tries to represent wider neighbourhood concerns, and in local situations it sometimes stands down if there is no larger city planning issue; occasionally it takes a position in disagreement with immediate neighbours. This work is laborious and highly technical, but P&D members act professionally even in conflictual situations.

Cof A usually agrees with the stands taken by HVRA because of its experience and technical knowledge, even when HVRA disagrees with City Planning. The P&D process is highly collaborative, involving many emails daily: everything written for submission to any entity is reviewed beforehand by the committee. Controversial matters should be shared with the board for their information.

b. Update on speaker for Spring Meeting (Gail)

As directed by discussion in the January Board meeting, Gail wrote to David Hulchanski on Jan. 17 and Jan. 28, but has not heard back. Meantime, an email from new resident Blake Poland outlined the work of a community group, Community Resilience for Extreme Weather (CREW), which is developing ideas for resilience hubs and emergency preparedness for the Toronto area. The CREW website (www.crewtoronto.ca) describes interesting work. CREW has done a resilience study for several other neighbourhoods, and offers help with resilience planning. Members agreed that a talk by this organization would be suitable for our spring meeting. Gail will pursue the idea further.

Rain Gardens had been raised as a potential topic for the Fall AGM, and Gail is now exploring another connection. Gail has written Mark Yamaguchi, featured in the [September 2017 article in the Toronto Star](#) mentioned at a previous meeting, and she will call him to talk further and to encourage him to attend the spring meeting as a guest, and the Fall meeting as a speaker.

c. Tree inventory update (Gus / Sue)

Gus has submitted the HVRA application for a summer student grant. We are not sure how much the grant would be. We have \$2200 available now, and would need \$5600 in total, so intend to send an eblast and rally donations (working again with the Toronto Lions for charitable receipts). Gus will remind Sandy Smith to recruit a student to ensure that our plans can proceed. Sandy has seen a copy of our application. The question was raised whether we should use some of the HVRA reserve funds to ensure completion of the tree inventory.

Gail noted one other source of funding. A film company working in the neighbourhood has promised a donation of \$750, which could go towards the tree inventory. Carolee suggested that we should ask film companies whether they would like public acknowledgement for such donations.

MOTION by Ann Eyerman, seconded by Gus Sinclair; approved.

If money from the federal grant and from donations, including those from filming, are not adequate to pay for the summer student's work, the board should consider using some of its reserve funds.

d. HVRA letterhead policy (Margaret / Communication Committee)

Margaret presented the draft policy for using HVRA letterhead as a response to the question raised at the November Board meeting about how authority to use HVRA letterhead was delegated and what the procedures were for using it. The Policy aims at a balance between practical efficiency and the goal of Board transparency.

Discussion focussed on clarifying the procedures outlined in the policy, and on the issue of efficiency. An emailed suggestion of having every letterhead communication sent to the Board was not supported because of concerns about overload of email. Some other changes in wording were incorporated, resulting in the version shown below:

Policy for Use of HVRA Letterhead

The HVRA letterhead designates a communication as an official Board statement. The Board delegates its authority to use letterhead in a number of situations, including those listed below. Consultation with other Board members is required for most of these.

1. The Chair and other Board Officers (Vice-Chair, Past Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership, Webmaster) are delegated to use letterhead without seeking prior approval for routine managerial communications such as paying bills, requesting information, or publicizing HVRA events.
2. Board Committees are delegated to use letterhead without seeking prior approval. However, at least three Board members, including one of the Chair, Past Chair, or Vice-Chair, should be consulted about the content of each document.
3. Individual Board members may also use letterhead when communicating about local issues such as sidewalk clearing, traffic calming, or arrangements for a Board event. At least three Board Members, including one of the Chair, Past Chair, or Vice-Chair, should be consulted about the content of each document.
4. Board members and occasionally non-Board participants in committees or working groups may be delegated to use letterhead for specific routine purposes such as requests or notes of thanks for contributions to HVRA events or projects. They can consult with experienced Board members and draw on examples of past letters for guidance .
5. Where a communication on letterhead has dealt with a controversial or significant matter, the full Board should be informed as soon as possible about it.

e. Status update on closing out 2017 financial year end (Gus)

Gus has met with Carlo, and the closing statement is nearly ready. He will circulate it soon.

- f. **Membership drive update** (Merrill)
See the written report below (6a).

5. Other Business

a. **TD Parks Application** (Jane)

As requested at the January meeting, Jane Perdue registered online to receive information from the Parks People organization about a TD grant to support community events in local parks. The grant is only \$2,000, and would require us to hold three events in the park, meaning that the Fall Fair would not in itself qualify us. The deadline is imminent. Board members agreed that we should not apply this year, but suggested that Jane describe to the Parks People how our single major event serves the neighbourhood, and how the grant criteria may limit participation for those communities with very few park spaces.

b. **Confirmation of Fall fair timing** (Gail)

In accord with previous email discussion, HVRA will retain the announced date of Sun. Sept. 9 for the 2018 Fall Fair. We recognize that this timing coincides with the Jewish High Holiday starting that evening, but will not make it impossible for people to attend earlier in the day.

c. **Spring Clean Up Event** (Gail and Gus)

Following up on a detailed email sent previously, Gail described a request from the two people now organizing the spring “Litter and Glitter” neighbourhood cleanup for HVRA to resume its participation. The event takes place on or around Earth Day (Sun. April 22). Gus outlined the reasons we had not sponsored the event for the last five years, but noted that we did advertise it in the HVRA eblast and some of us participated. Gail summarized the current organizers’ attestation that even with far fewer prizes offered, they still got 180 participants for the morning’s work, and noted that they had shown her clear records and accounts. They would like us to help advertise for volunteers and to reconnect them with the local BIAs, but did not ask directly for a financial donation. The Board consensus was that we are willing to be more involved with this worthwhile event if we have a seat on the organizing committee and can exert due diligence about financial liability. Gus was tasked with contacting the organizers to further ascertain whether they had any financial liabilities that we need to be aware of before HVRA makes a firm commitment to sponsor the event.

d. **Residential Snow Removal follow up** (Bob)

Bob received a positive response from both the Mayor’s and Councillor’s offices to his letter about the lack of City sidewalk clearing in downtown residential areas. They have promised

to investigate the situation, and the Councillor's office says a staff report is being prepared on the matter.

e. Community Council (Feb. 21) on Extension to Café Boulevard Permit at 76 Lippincott (Bob)

Several neighbours have objected to the application to extend the patio of this business, whose front door is on Lippincott just above College. City staff recommends a denial, and the Councillor supports the denial. Bob will depute for HVRA at Community Council to oppose the application for extension. He also described for us the anomaly in the existence of the original patio permit, which does not fit the criteria for either the flanking patio rules or for a front patio on a main street. In the 2017 bylaw review on sidewalk patios and clearways (not yet adopted by Council), Bob raised a question about patios on residential side streets. After seeing the problems raised by this request for a further extension, the Councillor's office will investigate the process followed for the original approval of the patio.

f. Lack of Enforcement of Bylaws on Traffic Matters (Carolee)

Carolee noted the lack of enforcement of bylaws on traffic matters (stop signs, wrong way), and the difficulty of getting Police Services to respond to complaints. It is clear that there is insufficient staff for non-urgent matters. Suggestions were made to keep calling and making complaints, and to sit and take and send photos at problem intersections. Given their interest in this topic, perhaps the Parents' Group could take this on in conjunction with the Transportation Committee. Merrill also noted that the Engineering student project was working on exactly this topic.

6. Receipt of reports

The following reports were distributed by email beforehand. Some led to discussion at the meeting.

a. Membership Committee (Merrill)

The Membership Committee (Merrill Swain, chair; Ann Eyerman, Lena Mortensen, Christian Mueller, Carolee Orme and Jane Perdue) met on Sat. Feb. 10. We decided that each area rep on the MC will write to their members to introduce themselves as area reps and to encourage members to renew. The message will also offer to remove their name if they no longer want to receive messages from HVRA. (NB: those who receive the eblast are already able to unsubscribe if they want to.)

We discussed whether to remove names from the membership list for people who do not respond to any messages about renewal (this would mean, for example, that they would no longer receive eblasts, and would no longer be able to vote). There was a consensus NOT to remove names, since our goal is to reach as many people as possible. It costs nothing to keep people on the list. Removal is permanent, and we could not see what would be gained by purging the list.

Three ideas were suggested to enhance our membership over time:

- A flyer to be posted in local businesses, etc. that lists what HVRA does and how to become a member. (It would be based on the letter sent by the Membership Secretary in June 2017 detailing all that HVRA does.)

- A “calling card” with the HVRA website address (and other info TBD) to hand out (at any event/time) to prospective members. (Ann is checking with an HVRA member re costs and design.)
- A contest during summer 2018 (between the Provincial and Municipal elections) to encourage members to sign up new members. The contest would be announced through an eblast and in the Spring newsletter.

We will ask the HVRA webmaster for an email address for the Membership Committee (membership-committee@harbordvillage.com; forwarded to all committee members), and one for each pair of area reps (e.g., HVRA.AreaRepXY@harbordvillage.com).

b. Communications Committee (Margaret)

The Communications Committee met on Feb. 6 and finished revising the draft HVRA Letterhead Policy. It responds to a Board request in November after a discussion "around what kind of approval process should be in place and whether and if delegations to Area Reps or Committees could be made." (See Agenda item 4d above for approval of a revised Policy.)

The committee also arrived at working answers for other issues:

- Eblast death notices for local residents: Ann will insert a note into an upcoming eblast inviting people to send notices of memorial events if they wish.
- Request from Seaton Village RA to copy our website design: Yes, but we cannot offer advice on design or implementation.
- Whether the webmaster should investigate and recommend upgraded support for website security and membership functions: Yes, if some can be found that are cost-efficient within a limit of a few hundred dollars in yearly fees.

c. Webmaster (Margaret)

New material has been added to the Board Area page, including guidelines by Gail Misra and James Murdoch for managing any future Yard Sales. (Also recently, Gus Sinclair's detailed file on organizing the Fall Fair.)

The sidebar story linking to Bob's letter about our lack of sidewalk snow clearance was viewed by about 100 unique visitors, most of them following a link in the Jan. 15 eblast.

The website is still experiencing a flood of error reports, mainly from web robots looking for vulnerabilities in the security settings. None has broken through, but I monitor the site regularly and have reported several attempts to official bodies. With the encouragement of the Communications Committee, I have begun investigating paid alternatives for this level of maintenance, including advanced software and specialized technical help, and will report on options next month.

d. Parent Consultation Committee (Nicole)

After one e-blast soliciting interest, we have created a PCC of ten parents who can communicate via an email list (pcc@harbordvillage.com). The members represent a reasonable geographic diversity and have children enrolled in three of our local TDSB elementary schools (Huron, King Edward and Lord Lansdowne) as well as four private schools. There are also several kids in daycares. It would be good to include someone with a child at Kensington (our other local TDSB elementary).

The issue of **Traffic Safety** was raised. Several members wanted to know if there was anything more they could do to facilitate speed humps along Robert (an initiative spearheaded by Gina Buonaguro,

one of the PCC members). Joe Cressy's office is not showing any movement on the file. (NOTE: See the Area report for SE below for a subsequent response.) There were some creative ideas about using street art to calm traffic.

The other issue raised was denial of access to **Green Space** in the neighbourhood, in particular space appropriate for play. Both the outdoor spaces owned by Lord Lansdowne school and the (sad sad sad) facilities at Robert and Sussex owned by U of T could be great assets were they to be made accessible to the neighbourhood.

e. Planning and Development Committee Report (Sue et al.)

- i. **Laneway housing and severances on lower Croft St.** On Feb. 14, the Committee of Adjustment rejected a proposal for 1-3 Croft St. The project was to replace an existing two- storey building with a one-storey garage flanking Croft St. and create three separate townhouses on three severed lots flanking the lane. Bob deputed for HVRA and about eight neighbours also attended in opposition. Our deputation involved a formidable amount of work.
- ii. **Green Master Plan:** The councillor wants to move the Green Master Plan forward. There are firm plans for installing the inground street planters, starting with four intersections this spring. Architectural drawings of the final plans will be circulated late this month. The second phase should include work on the flanking properties along Harbord. We suggest that the Board recommend that the Councillor hold a public meeting, perhaps in June after some of the inground street planters have been created, to look at potential designs for greening flanking properties along Harbord. Examples could include the successful design for the Harbord/Bathurst shared use parkette and possibly the BIA designs for sites along Bloor. And then we can begin to turn our minds to laneways and green threadways, as part of public realm improvements.

MOTION: Moved by Sue, seconded by Gus. Approved.

That HVRA write to the Councillor recommending that he hold a public meeting in late Spring to consider design options for flanking properties along Harbord as the second stage of the Green Master Plan.

(In discussion, suggestions were made to contact the Harbord Street BIA and also Urban Design or the Public Realm staff, including Robert Mays.)

- iii. **Mirvish Village transportation:** We foresee serious transportation issues related to the Mirvish Village Honest Ed's development, including the "pain points" of Markham and Bloor (pedestrian pressures) and Lennox and Bathurst (cars exiting the garage on Lennox). Westbank traffic consultants, the City's transportation experts and City Planning addressing only the site itself, not traffic around it. The four Resident Associations are concerned about vehicles headed to site and needing to find their way through the communities (e.g., to the Lennox garage via Lippincott or Palmerston). Our planned inground plantings may help inform the plans and process at Mirvish Village. Residents and the RAs have pressed the Councillors for a complete-streets look at traffic impacts and streetscapes, to include traffic mitigation by urban design, tree canopy expansion, inground plantings, and other nifty ideas. Staff of both Councillors were against street closures, but in favour of the study.
- iv. **Laneways:** City Planning is convening a summit of the City of Toronto RAs to discuss its Laneway study initiative on the 24th of February. It is a delegated meeting from the 80 RAs of the old City of Toronto. Bob Stambula will attend. Public meetings will follow.

- v. **Planning department issues:** Carolee, Bob and Sue met with our local planner and the head of South District Planning to find specific ways to better deal with Committee of Adjustment applications, so the voice of the community can be heard. We discussed nine active C of A files.
- vi. **Working Group Committee of Adjustment/Planning:** HVRA, Seaton Village and the Annex Residents' Association along with Robert Brown, former chair of a City Committee of Adjustment, have formed a working group to analyze CofA and planning processes.
- vii. Further work is being done in confidential and without-prejudice proceedings on other local development issues, including the Four Corners Study and the proposal for a student residence at Sussex and Spadina.

f. Transportation Committee, Carolee Orme

We met for the second time on Feb 17 and decided an HVRA email address would be helpful (*now set up as transportation@harbordvillage.com*) so we can solicit community concerns about traffic and parking through an eblast. We also discussed parents' concerns about traffic speed and decided to gather information about various methods of traffic calming. Andrea will ensure that the Robert St. parents are connected to the Major St. group who promoted the speed humps there. We also talked about the shrinking availability of street parking for residents. Carolee will connect with the City to find out more. We talked about the absence of enforcement of traffic laws such as stop signs and one-ways, and of other bylaws, such as snow clearing, and thought a letter from the Board to Police, our councillor, etc might be in order.

Merrill and Ann have met twice with the Engineering students concerning their "One-Way Street Project" and reported: "The six students in the group are first year undergrads, three women and three men from diverse backgrounds. During the first meeting (Jan. 19), the parameters of the project were discussed so that the students could write up their first assignment concerning objectives and background information. During the second meeting (Feb. 19), we discussed the document the students had prepared which outlined the problem, objectives and constraints of any solutions to HVRA's 'wrong-way' drivers. We will meet again March 21st to discuss the solutions the students will have proposed."

g. Area Reports

NE Area Report, Carolee: Largely quiet in the 'hood. Only exception is emergence of the Robert St tennis court as a busy dog-gathering place. We're not aware of it causing any problems, and it does seem to be increasing connections among neighbours.

SW Area Report, Jane: On Tuesday Feb. 27, 7-8 pm, the Fort York Food Bank (new tenant, NE corner Borden and College) will host a community dropin for neighbours. Councillor Cressy's office will be in attendance to assist with any questions. FYFB is one of the largest food banks in Toronto.

A staff report from Municipal Licensing and Standards recommending denial of appeal to operate a Boulevard Cafe at 76 Lippincott (Wrapido) will be considered at Toronto East York Community Council (Feb 21). (*See report 5e above for more detail.*)

SC Area Report, Anne: One member voiced a concern about a neighbour dumping garbage into her bin. We suggested she first try to talk to the person about this issue and, if that didn't work, to call 311 for help. This becomes more of an issue now that we have to pay for garbage that does not fit into the grey bin.

SE Area Report, Lena: Joan Wilson from Joe Cressy's office has responded to residents' correspondence about the traffic calming/speed hump effort on Robert St. Joan notes that Transportation studies take several months and that there is a backlog, but says because of community support she will push for installation as soon as possible. This seems like good news, but Lena will ask if what the Board can do to help keep the focus on this issue.

7. Any Other Business

The Fort York Food Bank has invited members of the Board, along with neighbouring residents, to attend its Feb. 27 Open House at the new College and Borden location. Neither Gus nor Gail is able to attend, but Margaret will attend on behalf of the Board. The event will be mentioned in the next HVRA eblast.

8. Motion to adjourn, 8:59 pm.

Note-taker, Margaret Procter