

## Harbord Village Residents' Association Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 7:00 pm

by Zoom call

### FINAL MINUTES

**Attendees:** Gina Buonaguro, Elizabeth Chen, Simon Coleman, Sue Dexter, Anne Fleming, Karen Laurence, Susan McDonald, Cathy Merkley, Lena Mortensen, Christian Mueller, Jane Perdue, Nick Provart, Gus Sinclair, Robert Stambula

**Regrets:** Kerry Clare, Frank Davis

1. **Chair's Welcome:** Anne called the meeting to order at 7:07.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Gus moved adoption of the agenda, seconded by Gina. Agenda adopted.
3. **Approval of the November 16th Board Meeting Minutes:** Gus moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Susan. **Motion Passed.**

#### 4. Business Arising from Past Minutes

**4.1 College Street Upgrade:** Robert reported on the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting with city staff. Key points of the meeting are attached as an appendix. His suggestion that College Street be reduced to a single driving lane was questioned by some members (Gina, Nick and others) who felt restricting flow on such a main artery might divert traffic to residential streets with a negative impact. Following discussion, Robert proposed:

That HVRA invite our Councillor and the City and all impacted departments (Transportation, Public Realm, Forestry, Urban Design) to gather with us to test what is possible and testing the alternative presented here, for what the City has proposed falls short and benefits cars over the public realm, CaféTO, sidewalks and greening opportunities. And if delay is required to do this, so be it. It's the price of an authentic consultation. Should the City decline, I recommend a report in line with this report go to our Councillor as the HVRA response to the proposed College Street Upgrade.

Gus seconded this proposal. **Motion passed with several members abstaining because they felt they did not have enough information to support the proposal.**

**4.2 Climate Statement revision:** Anne presented a revised version of Sue's Climate Statement intended to provide more detail for people unfamiliar with HVRA's climate work. The revised version is attached as an appendix. Gus moved that the revision be accepted; Susan seconded. **Motion passed.**

**4.3 Ontario Non-Profit Business Corporations Act:** Anne reported on an information meeting she attended concerning changes to this act. She said that we have three years to bring our articles of incorporation and bylaws into compliance but noted that very few of the changes affect HVRA. Gus volunteered to examine our incorporation documents in light of the new requirements and to report back to the board on what changes are required to comply so that the necessary changes can be presented to the general membership in the spring. Anne said she would send the relevant information to Gus.

## **5. New Business**

**5.1 Community Outreach – Fort York Food Bank:** Anne reported on a couple of recent emails from Julie LeJeune at FYFB who expressed an interest in greater communication between the two organizations, and mentioned a new FYFB board member, Jorge Muina, who lives in HV and wants to be more connected to HVRA. Anne suggested that HVRA might appoint a board liaison to the food bank. There was also an email promoting FYFB's upcoming "Coldest Night of the Year" fundraiser and asked that HVRA support the event. Anne said she would forward that email to the board.

**5.2 Sidewalk Snow Clearing:** Bob reported on the most recent information from Mike Layton's office: the city will be doing all downtown neighbourhoods within this season. The normal season begins in December, and walks will be cleared if there is an accumulation of 2 cm of snow or more. (Eight cm of snow is required to trigger clearing in November.) Clearing will begin once the snow has stopped and may take up to 48 hours to be completed.

**5.3 Net Zero Committee Active Transportation Statement and Motion:** Anne presented the following Net Zero Committee's Motion of support for Active Transportation:

Whereas the HVRA's board recently passed a motion declaring that all subsequent board decisions be viewed through a climate lens,

Whereas Toronto City Council unanimously passed a Transform TO recommendation that 75% of trips be undertaken by active transportation (bike, walk or transit) by 2050,

Whereas PARA, the ARA and the Grange CA have explicitly endorsed new infrastructure that helps the City achieve the above goal,

Our Net Zero Carbon committee proposes that the board publicly endorses – and supports – active transportation in and through our neighbourhood, and the infrastructure needed to achieve this.

Acceptance was moved by Gus and seconded by Susan. **Motion was passed.** A background report is appended to the minutes.

## **6. Committee and Area Rep Reports** (appended only if no action or discussion required)

**6.1 Planning and Development:** Sue reported on various P & D deputations including to the November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the City Planning and Housing Committee concerning Laneway Suites (deputation appended) and to the December 2<sup>nd</sup> City Infrastructure and Environment Committee on Transform To which will be going to council December 15. She also discussed a motion going to council regarding the developments proposed for three of the four corners at Bloor and Spadina. There will be a huge amount of intensification at that single corner and some coherent plan going forward is required.

**6.2 Central Tech Liaison Committee Other Business:** Gus reported on the Central Tech Facilities and Management Committee meeting December 13. He pointed out that for various reasons this committee had not met in over a year which has resulted in communication issues engendering hostility and frustration in some local residents. The committee is trying to get an email site with the TDSB where people can ask questions or make complaints, but the challenge is making sure that the emails are monitored. They are also discussing setting up a website that would provide the kind of information (hours, contacts) that people have been looking for. Anne and Gus thanked Gina and other board members who are monitoring Facebook and alerting Gus to the comments being made there.

## **7. Other Business**

**7.1 FoSTRA:** Anne reported that HVRA is now a member of this group, and that we have received a form from them asking in what areas we might be able to support them. She will circulate that form so anyone who wishes to provide back up or support can do so.

**7.2 Safe Streets Committee:** Effective Communication between the board and the committee continues to be a problem, but Anne has been meeting with Nicole and Bob and trying to sort things out. One particular issue where coordination would be useful is traffic management at Robert and Sussex, which was highlighted in the NE area report this month (appended).

**8. Adjournment:** Anne thanked everyone for all their work, and moved the meeting be adjourned. Karen seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:47

## APPENDICES

### College Upgrade Report

Update of the College Street Upgrade

December 14, 2021

1. The College Upgrade is a multi-faceted project planned for next year - piggy-backed on TTC work.
2. The City presented the Bloor Street bike lane as a model for College.
3. No consultation occurred; the City marketed an overview of its proposals.
4. We sought details and a second meeting in December occurred:
  - a. Staff made clear that material changes were not possible.
  - b. The plan was designed for the very little funding available.
  - c. No greening was planned except for increasing the size of tree pits.
  - d. It produced the some additional information but more importantly clarified the underlying choices.
5. **The City Plan for College:**
  - a. Like Bloor, College is to have one 24/7 lane (also serving TTC tracks) in both directions.
  - b. But unlike Bloor Street, a second (temporary 3 hour) rush hour lane traffic is kept in each direction on College; used for parking during non-rush hour; CaféTO will go here to during the patio season.
  - c. Unlike Bloor, sidewalks are “trimmed” and whole bump-outs removed at Campbell Lane & Croft (and more on the south side).
  - d. Unlike Bloor, the bike lane will not be straight but weave in/out of laybys.
6. **An alternative is:**
  - a. Make a better, straight, separated and raised bike lane in its (approximate) current location; i.e. the most desirable and safest throughput for bike lanes are straight shots.
  - b. Expand the public realm/sidewalk/greening opportunities into the laybys.
  - c. Implement the HVRA Green Plan: Repatriate & Green flanks.
  - d. Keep CaféTO on the sidewalk (in the former laybys where they were).
  - e. Give up the temporary 3 hour rush hour lane in each direction.

Note: This proposal is not very different to the City plan. Its proposal has the same practical impact for the majority of the year on rush hour traffic; i.e. during patio season (April to October), the City locates CaféTo in the 3 hour rush hour lane thus eliminating it for rush hour use

#### Analysis:

**The City plan pits cycling infrastructure against the public realm/sidewalks/greening to maintain a 3 hours lane of rush hour traffic.** This approach offends its own policy that: “Pedestrians, cyclists and

public transit will be prioritized relative to private automobiles, informed by the application of design guidelines for Complete Streets as developed and applied by the City.” (Policy 8.2 Downtown Plan, page 33)

Remember, that College west of Spadina is treated differently from east of Spadina (College Street Built Form Study and more). From the east, a broad institutional street turns into a community main street with a majority pedestrians, kids (public elementary schools) and seniors (LTC Home), the faithful (several places of worship), with small independent storefronts, restaurants and Kensington Market.

The City proposal as drafted creates a four lane rush hour condition on College until it is narrows just west of us at Manning. We believe the narrowing should occur when College flanks communities: At Harbord Village, Kensington, and Palmerston Area Residents’ Associations.

**Recommendations:**

Invite our Councillor and the City and all impacted departments (Transportation, Public Realm, Forestry, Urban Design) to gather with us to test what is possible and testing the alternative presented here, for what the City has proposed falls short and benefits cars over the public realm, CaféTO, sidewalks and greening opportunities. And if delay is required to do this, so be it. It’s the price of an authentic consultation.

Should the City decline, I recommend a report in line with this report go to our Councillor as the HVRA response to the proposed College Street Upgrade.

## **Revised Climate Statement**

**The climate crisis is the result of billions of individual and collective decisions. To end it will require determination, vigilance and sacrifice at all levels in all societies.**

**Neighbourhoods matter. We are the source of emissions; at the same time our trees are a carbon sink. We are also the lynchpin between the city government and residents and, as individuals and within associations, are in the unique position to influence both.**

**We respond directly to proposals from government. We actively seek positive change.**

**Our challenge is**

- to consider the ecological consequences in what we do,**
- to recommend changes to policies and initiatives that have negative impacts on the environment,**
- to encourage and assist fellow residents to take steps to protect the planet's life sustaining systems.**

**Over the years, HVRA Board has undertaken many projects including an official greening plan, tree inventories, programs of canopy maintenance and renewal, and heat island reduction. Today we have a NetZero Committee that is promoting household retrofits and studying E-bikes.**

**We can do more.**

**In future we will apply an ecological impact consideration on our actions and on the policies we advocate and those we respond to from governments.**

**MOVED: That HVRA apply an ecological impact consideration on actions we take and policies we advocate with the goal of reducing carbon emissions and restoring the health of the planet.**

## Active Transportation Motion

Whereas HVRA's board recently passed a motion declaring that all subsequent board decisions be viewed through a climate lens,

Whereas Toronto City Council unanimously passed a Transform TO recommendation that 75% of trips be undertaken by active transportation (bike, walk or transit) by 2050,

Whereas PARA, the ARA and the Grange CA have explicitly endorsed new infrastructure that helps the City achieve the above goal,

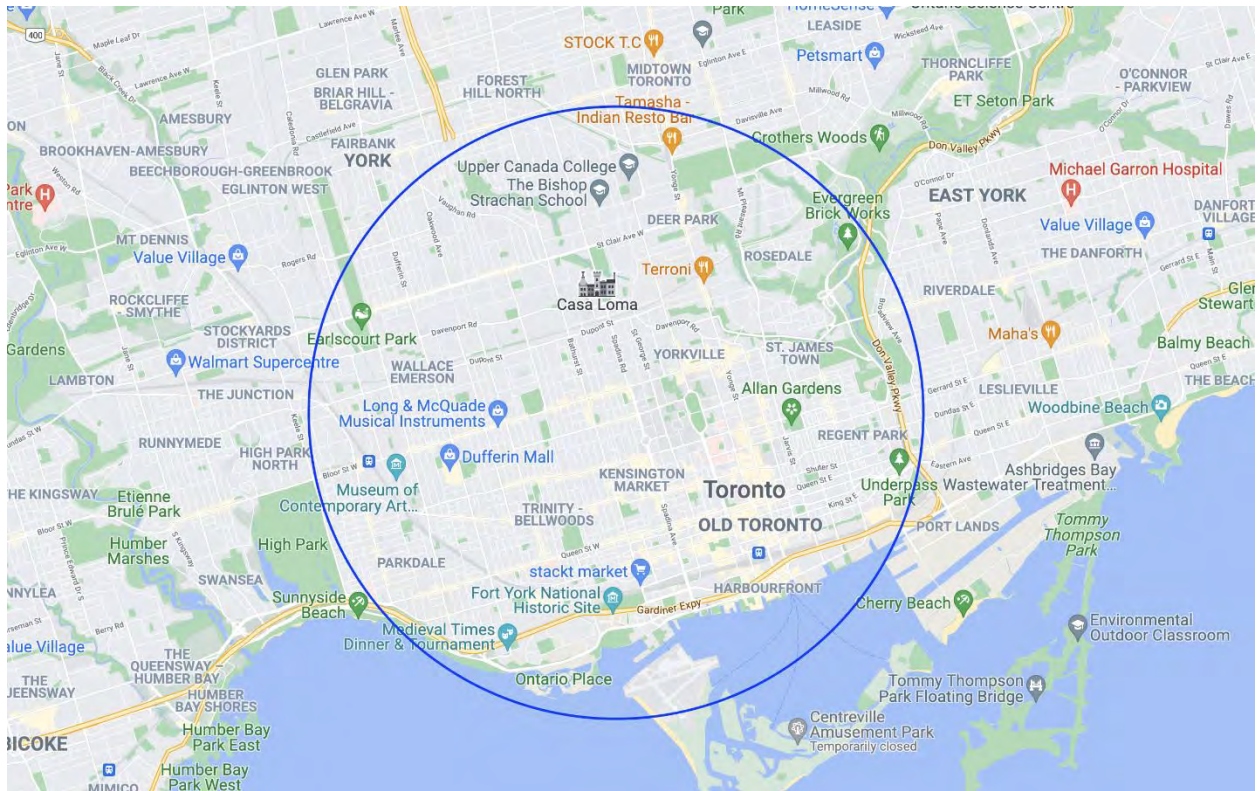
Our Net Zero Carbon committee proposes the board publicly endorses – and supports – active transportation in and through our neighbourhood, and the infrastructure needed to achieve this.

### Appendix

The attached report represents the background that led the Net Zero Carbon committee to develop this resolution.

The NetZero group is working to get Harbord Villagers to lower their carbon footprint. We are running out of time. Unless we lower emissions now, we will reach 1.5° of warming in eleven years, and the result will be catastrophic. So we're trying to help residents decarbonize their homes and reduce their reliance on gas-powered vehicles. The city is also trying to reduce our emissions. TransformTO plans to get gas powered cars off the road entirely by 2050, and to shift shorter trips from vehicles to active transportation (transit, biking, walking). Right now only about 37% of those trips use active transportation; the city wants to reach 75%. Clearly we need to get an awful lot more people out of cars, but for that to happen there need to be viable alternatives.

For this reason it is essential that we press for the city to step up and provide the infrastructure that active transportation demands. If you look at the map, a 5km radius around Harbord Village encompasses most of downtown Toronto. How many of us can say that three quarters of all our trips in that circle rely on active transportation? Clearly each one of us needs to step up and do what we can, but in addition we



need to push for the changes that will allow more people to use active transportation. Hence this letter.

The HVRA has long been mindful of the environment, fighting to protect our trees and add greenspace. We urge the HVRA to remember that, right now, lowering our carbon emissions is crucial. The board has advocated for sidewalk snow clearances to maintain pedestrian access, but has shied away from taking sides on bike lanes because they remain divisive. That is unlikely to change in the short term, but we ask that the HVRA remain mindful of the urgent need to increase active transportation both in, and through, our neighbourhood. It is not enough to paint a line on a street and call it a bike lane. We need bike routes that are safe enough to be used by a wide variety of people, not just road warriors. This will entail changes to the status quo, but without significant changes to how we live now we face a terrible future.

We write to remind the board, not only of the problem, but of the urgency in responding. The city's wheels turn slowly as it is, we need to do what we can to point them in the right direction and speed them up.



# Laneway Housing Deputation

Nov. 24, 2021.

Good morning.

I am Sue Dexter, Harbord Village Residents' Association. We are a tight Victorian subdivision, constructed in the late 1880s between Bloor and College, from Spadina to Bathurst. We are threaded with laneways, except for a single residential block. We are a majority row housing of modest houses sitting on small lots.

Others have and will address other objections to planning recommendations. Our opposition to the soft landscaping reductions is driven by the Climate Emergency.

Last week, Harbord Village RA unanimously adopted a resolution calling for us in our advocacy and actions, to consider climate impacts first. Our NetZero Committee is working to reduce neighbourhood emissions by 50% by 2030.

The Climate Emergency is borne of hundreds of millions of individual and collective decisions. The solution to greenhouse gas pollution will be borne of hundreds of millions of individual and collective decisions to stop harm.

Yes, housing is a human need.

A viable planet is a predominant human need.

These should not be seen as rival imperatives. We can do both. But we should not diminish the capacity of the planet to move back from the brink by taking harmful decisions—especially ones that are not urgently necessary.

Trees are the only proven sink for greenhouse gases. To reduce growth space from 85-58% for a walkway that is not a necessity does not address our Climate Emergency. Does anyone think the success of the laneway housing initiative turns on reducing the greenspace between the mother and daughter dwellings. Surely not.

In the last ten years, Harbord Village has lost 30% of our trees—1,371 in total—most to construction and aging. Our canopy cover is 21.9%, well short of the City's 40% target—to the point where City Forestry has been directed to conduct a study for emergency remediation. The removal of any tree is not an

isolated event: it creates more stress on the remaining trees in a neighbourhood by adding to heat stress, pollution impacts and water availability, for a tree change itself is stress.

While City Planning acknowledges the importance of Climate impacts, its report advocates the reduction of space for rear yard trees, while promising to “specifically work to mitigate impacts on the City’s soft landscaping, water permeable areas and tree canopy.” You cannot deduct and mitigate at the same time.

Here is our ask:

Decision by decision, act by act, we must all be rigorous in our defence of the planet that sustains life.

We have requested access to a detailed review from City Forestry on impacts of laneway housing on the canopy, including loss of leaf area, reduction in hard surfaces, recapture of soft landscaping, failure to replace trees injured or lost in situ. The review should consider all trees, not just bylaw protected trees. We would also request a review of Committee of Adjustment’s history of approving reduction in rear yard soft landscaping.

Climate impacts permeate all we do. It is the one file we can ill afford to get wrong.

## Northeast Area Reps' Report

1. A petition to have speed humps installed on Sussex Ave. between Robert and Sussex Mews received unanimous support from 8 of 9 owners on that stretch of Sussex Ave (1 owner did not vote), and from all renters who voted. There was also strong support (80%) for dead-ending Sussex Ave. at Sussex Mews to prevent wrong-way drivers and improve safety for the new community green space.
2. Nicholas Provart deputized at the TEYCC to have "No Construction Vehicles" signage installed for the stretch of Sussex Ave. west of Sussex Mews (and a "Do Not Enter - Construction" sign on Sussex at Robert to prevent wrong-way construction deliveries). This amendment was supported by Councillor Layton and accepted with minor wording changes ([TE29.37](#), see point 18). It will be considered at Council tomorrow. It is a bit ridiculous that Nick had to deputize - such signage is a no brainer really.
3. Construction activities are ramping up at 698/700 Spadina and 666 Spadina. A new POPS is nicely taking shape at 666 Spadina!
4. It appears that activity at the Esso station at Harbord & Major has ramped up, suggesting an opening relatively soon, based on increased activity outfitting the inside of the store and the presence of TSSA vehicles onsite (likely performing inspections of the fueling system). Maybe this will be a cheaper Esso, like the one at Dupont and Davenport ;-)

Nicholas Provart & Frank Davis

## Nov. 10, 2021 U of T Liaison/planning

1. There are now developments in play on three of the four corners of Bloor and Spadina. 350 Bloor, east of Shopper's is close to coming to council. The northeast corner ScotiaBank proposal has just come in. The University is some distance along in planning towers for Site One, on the southeast corner of Bloor and Spadina. The Councillor wants to put in an affordable housing building north of the subway station north of Bloor. There should be a study encompassing the entire intersection, as, if all developments were approved, we would be housing an additional thousand people at an already congested intersection, with resultant pressures of greenspace, transportation etc.
2. Huron-Sussex, Annex and HVRA attended the first meeting with U of T, City Planning and the Councillor on Site 1—the west side of UTS to Washington off Spadina. No architect has been hired, so the University outlined in general what its wish list may be for the site. Their idea is to build two towers, 93 and 97 m. with tower separation. These would flank Spadina and Bloor, west of the UTS heritage building, and would extend into the parking lot behind. Heights conform to the Knox viewshed zoning requirement. The buildings will be mostly for housing but including some retail and some institutional. The project is at the notional stage and subsequent meetings will be held to identify points of concern.  
City Planning gave its thoughts on the updated U of T Secondary Plan context. At the moment, the City is looking into heritage protection for the Spadina flank. The planner indicated the City would not at this point object to the University building onto the backwalls of houses along Washington St.  
In subsequent meetings, the communities will engage on this issue and others that may arise in the course of the discussions. They are using the ARA checklist as a basis for identifying concerns.
3. The Queen's Park heritage conservation district planning group has resumed work, with plans to draft a study proposal, in keeping with council direction on the Planetarium site.
4. HVRA comments on amendments to the rules concerning Laneway Housing are attached. City Planning may have agreed to loosen the soft landscaping provision of the bylaw, from a requirement of 85% soft landscaping to what may be 60%. Planning will recommend an increase in height from 6.0 to 6.3 m. and will slightly reduce the laneway greenspace requirement. We will be able to draft out letter of objection once we see the actual planning report.
5. The IZ proposal is now with the Province. It applies only to areas around major transit stops. The minister has the authority to unilaterally change its provisions. Developments

with less than 100 new units would be covered. Replacement units for displaced tenants would be additional. So if there are 30 existing tenants, affordable in a new build would not be triggered on an application under 130 units.

# SafeStreets

## November report

### Ongoing business:

- Followed up on the promise to install painted stop lines at signed stops where absent (one has been done so far, and seems to be helping), Councillor's office has made sure that they are in the queue so we will keep waiting
- Still waiting on completion of parts of Brunswick/Borden counterflow (raised intersection at Borden & Ulster and the installation of bike crossing at College has been tied to College St.

renewal, see below, in 2022)

### Awaiting from the board:

- Was there a response to our July letter to the Bloor St BIA about trying to discourage delivery bikes from using the sidewalks?
- Who, aside from us, will be involved in the proposed community meeting regarding the Brunswick/Borden contraflow? And when will it occur?

Currently we have been looking into the safety aspects of the proposed changes to College. Councillor Layton made it quite clear that one of the projects main goals is increasing road safety for all users, and the design includes various features to:

- protect cyclists from traffic
- calm traffic through lane narrowing
- improve safety for people getting on and off streetcars with improved marking for crossing the cycle track
- provide cycle lanes that will not be made impassible by snow clearance (as is now the case)
- create cycle lanes that are wide enough to allow passing within them, without entering vehicular lanes (which will be physically separated)
- increase pedestrian safety through traffic calming intersections
- coherently tie into the Bellevue/Borden NS bike lanes

Overall these changes should make College and the streets that connect with College, safer -- which is what we want. So overall we are enthusiastic. That said, it is not a perfect plan and there are a few specifics that we would like to see addressed:

- The Spadina/College intersection is currently too dangerous. Although this plan is limited in how much it can improve it, we would like the city to make a commitment to explore and implement what is possible.
- The plan includes raised pedestrian crossings of a few of the streets where they meet College. This is an excellent traffic calming measure, and we would like to see it applied to as many of the intersecting streets as possible (at least one street cannot have it because of drainage issues). The current practice is to only implement it near schools, but as I believe all of those killed or seriously injured on this stretch were adults that does not make sense.
- It remains unclear what kind of measures would be implemented for businesses with CafeTO terraces, if there are any, to prevent collisions as patrons and staff cross the bike lane. This needs to be thought through because it is potentially quite dangerous.
- The specifics of how the bike crossing/holding pen at Borden, the signalized laneway South of College by Kensington school, and the pedestrian crossings are planned need to be clarified as well (the signalized pedestrian crossing of the sidewalk is bizarre and should be removed). That these are immediately adjacent to a school makes safety at this junction particularly important.

The overall goals of this plan are ones we endorse, and we hope that the board will also endorse the plan, with the caveats that we are able to work out these details to everyone's satisfaction.