

## Conflict Resolution Protocol Between HVRA and HSBIA

**The Harbord Village Residents Association and the Harbord Street Business Improvement Area** propose that there be established a *Joint Conflict Resolution Committee* (JCRC) to deal with such problems as might arise between businesses and residents in our neighborhood.

### **Objective of the Joint Conflict Resolution Committee (JCRC)**

At the most basic level, the objective of this Committee is to eliminate false information from spreading and causing disharmony in the community.

Beyond this, the Committee will serve the role of bringing the parties of a dispute together in order to provide a forum in which both sides can express their concerns and hear the other side of the disagreement.

Some recommendations may be made by the JCRC in order to foster agreements among the parties. These are only suggestions and the principals are in no way bound to these proposed solutions.

Failing to achieve agreement, the JCRC may offer information as to further steps available *outside of the JCRC format* for resolution of the dispute.

### **Structure**

The committee would consist of the chair/ president of the HVRA and HBIA and a member of the board from each association. Therefore, four individuals will make up the JCRC. (At present only 1 of the eligible BIAs would be involved; depending on the success of the proposed structure one might want to broaden its scope.)

### **Process**

The committee (JCRC) will, in the first instance, serve as a clearing-house for concerns that arise regarding rumored or real intentions that are perceived to have a deleterious effect on the well-being of the neighborhood.

A resident-or a business-might approach the respective board with a concern. If no immediate additional knowledge or solution is available, the Board would contact the JCRC and this committee would be charged with establishing the facts of the matter. It is possible that this is all that is needed to fore-stall a potential problem.

The JCRC may ask each association to exercise its powers of moral suasion or offer such remedies as it is in a position to provide.

Should this prove inadequate, the JCRC would offer to facilitate a meeting (a hearing) between the parties to the disagreement-offering a meeting space and chairing the hearing.

## **Hearings**

The hearings would be chaired alternatively by the Chair/President of HVRA and HBIA.

Once a hearing is called, it is not expected that the JCRC members would become advocates for their respective sides; indeed such advocacy would compromise the effectiveness of the hearing.

Each party to the dispute could bring up to two people to the hearing for support or guidance.

Given the voluntary and informal nature of the JCRC hearing process, it is not intended that lawyers would be at the hearing in an official legal capacity.

The meetings would last as long as they are productive. Some situations may require a series of meetings. Hence, the timing, duration and frequency of the hearings remain flexible to meet the specific needs of each situation.

A record would be kept of the proceedings, primarily for the benefit of the participants. This record will remain confidential unless both parties agree to it being made public.

## **Beyond the JCRC**

Two types of situations might arise that fall outside of the strict responsibility of the JCRC:

1. If the matter is one that involves the neighborhood at large, the JCRC might judge that a public meeting is called for. The JCRC may call this meeting but the board members of the HVRA and HBIA will play a role in assisting with the notification and other arrangements for this gathering.
2. In some circumstances, the parties to the disagreement might determine that they wish to make use of a professional mediator. The JCRC may be able to facilitate this meeting, but this falls outside of the narrower role of the JCRC.