



## **St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association Community Meeting**

**Held on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform**

SLNA President Stewart Linton welcomed 82 community members and Delegates to the January 2023 SLNA Community Meeting.

### **Adelaide Street: traffic and bike lane changes – Becky Katz and Dr. Zeshan Abdy**

Project Manager Becky Katz and Dr. Zeeshan Abdy, Senior Project Manager, are both members of the Transportation Services, Cycling and Pedestrians Projects and started their presentation with an overview of the 2022-2023 Adelaide Projects.

#### **2022-2023 Adelaide Projects**

- Watermain replacement between York Street and Victoria Street and streetcar track between Charlotte Street and York Street reinstatement work needs to take place in advance of the planned construction of the Ontario Line subway by Metrolinx
- During construction of the Ontario Line, the eastbound 501 Queen streetcar will be diverted to Adelaide Street between York Street and Victoria Street
- The planned street car track reinstatement work on Adelaide Street west of York Street is necessary to allow for TTC route diversions in the downtown core
- The planned construction provided an opportunity to implement upgrades on Adelaide Street:

1. Relocation of the cycle track from the south to the north side of the street from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street
2. Modification of traffic signal timing and equipment
3. Pedestrian safety improvements at various locations

This will be implemented this year.

### **Adelaide Street Background**

In 2019, the pilot cycle tracks on Richmond Street and Adelaide Street from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street were made permanent. At that time, City Council directed that the existing cycle tracks be moved from the south side to the north side of the street. The flip was recommended because:

- Presently, people cycling are required to merge with motor vehicle traffic in from of First Canadian Place and Scotia Place
- There are over 300 commercial delivery vehicles per day that require access to the truck elevators serving these properties

### **Adelaide Street Improvements Overview**

The construction on Adelaide Street will include:

- Motor vehicle relocation – there will be two through motor vehicle lanes and left turn lanes at all signalized intersections
- Parking relocation for the north side to the south side, with exception of the block between George Street and Sherbourne Street where parking will be on the north side (adjacent to the Post Office building)
- Cycle track relocation from the south to the north side of the street from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street
- Installation of protected left turn phasing, new bicycle signals and signal timing
- Curb radii reductions at various locations from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street

### **Cycling Improvements**

The relocation of the cycle track to the north side of Adelaide Street aims to improve safety and motor vehicle/delivery operations. It will also eliminate conflict between people cycling and turning trucks, and will remove the requirement for people cycling to merge with motor vehicle traffic at First Canadian Place.

## Eastbound Protected Left-turn Intersections

Protected motor vehicle left turn phases will be installed at high volume intersections of left turning motor vehicles to improve traffic flow and reduce the number of left-turning motor vehicles in in conflict with pedestrians and cyclists.

Spadina Avenue	Victoria Street
Peter Street	Church Street
John Street	Jarvis Street
University Avenue	Sherbourne Street
York Street	Parliament Street
Bay Street	
Yonge Street	

## Curb Radii Reductions

Following the City's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, curb radii will be reduced. Curb radii are the curved sections that connect two intersecting streets and provide the following benefits:

- Drivers are deterred from making right-turns at high speeds
- Pedestrian crossing distances are reduced
- Visibility is increased
- The space available for pedestrians waiting to cross is increased

In answer to an audience question about the possibility of slowing down traffic at Adelaide Becky Katz responded that right now Adelaide is three lanes with people turning a lot at intersections. People are driving swiftly and there are challenges with speeding on the corridor. The protected left-turning movements are very important for the safety of the project. It is not that traditional to have a bike lane on your left side while driving. There will also be permanent parking on the South side which will create some meandering and will create positive friction. This will start in March or April 2023 but it is dependent on the road resurfacing and water main section work that is underway. The biggest change will be the signal changes and those modifications will be made first.

Another question from the audience - are the left-hand turning lanes turning lanes only or can cars also proceed through the intersection to go straight. Becky Katz confirmed that they are left-hand only because they have a protected phase. Another couple of questions - when will it all be done and will the bike lanes be opened in stages, and the Queen streetcar diverting to Richmond & Adelaide, where and when will that happen. The parking and signal work is set to start in March. The bike lane will have to be flipped from Bathurst to Parliament, so it's not just

within the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. Becky assumes that the contractors will be working on this in stages, but it is scheduled to be open in 2023. The streetcar diversion will be between York and Victoria because Queen Street in front of the Eaton Centre will be closed. The Queen streetcar will come to York, divert South, it will travel on Adelaide and then turn North to rejoin Queen Street. Adelaide itself is quite wide and has some extra space, and Becky mentioned that sidewalk extensions will be developed to extend the public realm for pedestrians. Becky confirmed that every mode will have their own signals, pedestrians and cyclists, as well as cars. Dr. Abdy added a link which should serve to answer all of the more detailed questions in this regard:

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/public-consultations/infrastructure-projects/adelaide-street-construction/>

### **Programming Update – Jacquie Gardner, St. Lawrence Market Gallery**

Jacqui Gardner, the St. Lawrence Market Gallery Clerk will be speaking on “What’s Happening At The Market Gallery? She has been working at the Gallery since 2010. Jacqui showed a historical photo of the Gallery from 1899. It started out as the Council Chamber of Toronto’s First City Hall and was used from 1845 to 1899, located above the shopping levels of St. Lawrence Market. It opened in 1979 as a Gallery with a mandate to collect and display Toronto’s Art, Culture and History and over 150 exhibits have been displayed over the last 43 years. The Gallery is operated by the City of Toronto and is one of its 10 Toronto History Museums which offer free admission to the public. The Gallery has offered free admission for most of its history and the other museums started offering it in May of 2022. The other museums are Colborne Lodge, Fort York, Gibson House, Mackenzie House, Montgomery’s Inn, Scarborough Museum, Spadina Museum, Todmorden Mills and Zion Schoolhouse. A second picture shows the current Gallery, complete with the Mayor’s Chair which is kept on display during all of the exhibits as it links to the history of the room.

The current exhibit is 60 Works, 60 Years, Toronto Outdoor Art Fair at 60. This exhibit opened in September 2021. It features 60 art works acquired from the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair over the last 40 years through the Mayor’s Purchase Award. These art works are all in the City’s Fine Art Collection. They were purchased at the Toronto Outdoor Art Fair which takes place every year in July at Nathan Phillips Square, and the City of Toronto purchases one or more pieces from one artist and adds them to the City of Toronto Art Collection, and the Mayor is involved in selecting the winning piece. This is an excellent way for our curators of new and upcoming artists and to diversity our collection to include more pieces from black and indigenous artists and people of colour. You can see this exhibit currently, during operating hours, which are Wednesday to Saturday from 11 am to 4 pm.

Our exhibits change more often than the current exhibit which has been there for quite a while since our regular schedule was disrupted by the Covid Pandemic. In the meantime Toronto History Museums has adopted a strategic plan which focuses on collaborating with equity deserving communities to highlight stories that have been left out of the narrative. Although we have kept the same exhibit we have been participating in a number of programs linked to the Strategic Plan under the Name “Awakenings”, along with the colleagues from some of the other museums. Last year we had a film shoot at St. Lawrence Hall, an interactive Soulpepper theatre production in the Gallery, readings from controversial books during the Wayo Childrens Festival with Jamii, step class and writing class with Julie Black in David Crombie Park, and a Truth travelling exhibit on Market Street. As well, tutorial staff are developing a new exhibition strategy in collaboration with an advisory group and an indigenous advisory circle so that when we relaunch the Gallery’s exhibition schedule our goals will align with their new goals.

We are continuing some of these Awakenings programs in 2023, however, we have no closing date for the current exhibit at this point but we are adding some smaller installations in the Gallery to the current exhibit. We will be adding “The Burn” which is a vessel which allows visitors to place their healing intentions into an opening, in the form of a cedar chip or sphere, and this is meant to provide visitors with the opportunity to heal from some of the experiences they have gone through during the pandemic. It is arriving tomorrow and will be there until February 1. This is coinciding with the upcoming third anniversary of the pandemic being declared on March 11 and it is part of a larger commemoration being produced by the City’s Mayor’s office. There will be a yoga workshop tomorrow as well which is already fully booked, but there will be others in the weeks to come. We are also planning a writing workshop series for racialized women which is called “She Writes”, probably in October/November. We have been working closely with Jamii, the BIA and the St. Lawrence Market, so we are actively looking for partners in the neighbourhood to work with. We do have an e-newsletter you can sign up for. [marketgallery@toronto.ca](mailto:marketgallery@toronto.ca) Jacqui confirmed that admission to the 10 museums mentioned will remain free, as per their Strategic Plan.

### **Community Update – Elevate/JFL – Edward LaRusic, Status Summary**

Edward works with Councillor Chris Moise after working with previous Councillor Wong-Tam. The two festivals held in this neighbourhood, Elevate and JFL, created some local controversy last summer and Edward wants to give an overview on what happened last year and how Councillor Moise wishes to approach future events this year and beyond. In 2020 Elevate and JFL had been planning a festival and proposed to use Berczy Park as a centralized space. They had the support of Councillor Wong-Tam, the Chair of the Economic Development Committee, as well as Mayor Tory. The fact that Elevate and JFL wanted to use downtown Toronto for their festivals was definitely seen as good news by the City, an uplift to the economy. Events such as Elevate and JFL would bring tourism, culture and uplift to the local economy. Elevate/JFL

wanted to use Berczy Park because of its proximity to venues such as Meridian Hall and St. Lawrence Center for the Arts for hosting their events, and they wanted a space where people before and after the events could gather to continue to have fun.

There were three major “buckets” of issues – notification, noise and site layout. All drew a lot of criticism of the event. Firstly, the matter of communication – Elevate and JFL had made promises that they were going to be in communication with the neighbours but on the whole the neighbourhood was surprised when they moved in. Regretfully on the city side the noise exemption permits were provided very late and that made it very challenging to distribute it to residents ahead of time. And of course we were in the middle of an election period last fall and our ability to communicate with the residents was significantly curtailed on the advice of the Integrity Commissioner. The second issue was certainly noise. Promises were made in that regard as well, but the noise level was clearly not below the level promised. On Tuesday Elevate’s sound equipment was not set up properly. Staff came in and corrected it and the general feeling was that Wednesday and Thursday were generally fine, with no noise violations. Friday was fine, Saturday and Sunday were not. There were many issues regarding site layout – they included positioning of the stage and speakers, the most impactful ones.

Councillor Moise recognizes these deficiencies and other issues residents have raised: however, he is still looking to support major events at Berczy Park. Some of you probably read the letter he sent to the community at the start of the year, and he is willing to address these three major issues and others looking forward. At minimum, he will be asking for a 2-week notice in advance to residents, and that includes noise exemption permits. There will be staff on-site to correct any noise concerns so they don’t reach the level of the bylaw violation. Organizers will be encouraged to get in touch with community members so they will not be caught off-guard again. Finally, it is important to Councillor Moise that organizers have a plan to use the space well, minimize noise and reduce the impact on residents, and plans will certainly be reviewed ahead of time. Organizers have been told that in addition to adhering to all the guidelines they will also have to get in touch with the buildings directly affected and explain how problems will be fixed for 2023 and beyond.

Edward provided his new email address: [Edward.LaRusic4@toronto.ca](mailto:Edward.LaRusic4@toronto.ca)

### **Delegate Presentations – Ken Jackson**

Ken Jackson, SLNA Delegate for 30 Wellington St. East and also a member of a community of residents living in the vicinity of Berczy Park who were very negatively impacted by last September’s Elevate/JFL’s block party. He wants to be very clear that they do not object to appropriate events in Berczy Park nor do they object to all aspects of the Elevate/JFL event. They only object to the Block Party which essentially was a highly amplified concert that went on for 6 nights, about 5 or 6 hours per night, plus more sessions in the afternoon. During one

night the sound was so intense that the windows in his apartment were rattling and he thought they might break. He lives about 100 m from where the stage was. As the event organizers have indicated that they wish to return again in September, he thought it was very important to table this event now for presentation and discussion. As many may not be familiar with the Elevate/JFL festival he has asked one his neighbours, Raymond David, to speak about the 2022 event before others in his group discuss where they are today and what they would like to see going forward.

## **Raymond David**

Raymond David lives at 80 Front Street in Market Square. For those of you who may not be familiar with last year's event, he would describe it as follows: Elevate/JFL have held 3-day back-to-back events at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and Meridian Hall, so we are talking about a total of six days. Front Street was closed between Church and Yonge and the organizers erected a stadium stage on the street for their nightly block parties. When he says stadium stage he means exactly that, the stage was approx. 50 ft wide, 30 ft high and it was positioned 15 ft away from the Berczy Condominium building. It accommodated multiple banks of speakers arranged in 8 ft high columns. The block party featured amplified live music and stand-up comedy with musical accompaniment. Berczy Park was incorporated as part of the 130,000 sq ft event space and the park was made largely inaccessible by privacy screening, event fencing and event kiosks. There was no advance notice of the event and residents did not know who to call on the first night or as issues arose. On the first night the amplified music was so loud it could be heard for blocks in all directions. He has lived at Market Square facing Front Street since 1992 and experienced many special events but never experienced anything like the Elevate/JFL block parties. He immediately contacted friends that first night who live in the neighbourhood and began a diary to record our collective experiences of the event. He also visited the site every day and every evening. He compiled his notes in a report which he submitted to the Councillor's office. Eddy has done an excellent job summarizing some of the key issues, but I want to touch on some of them: there was the lack of public consultation, the lack of public notice, the event staging, the high volume, the 6-day duration, the 11 pm closing time and the overall lack of accountability. While Eddy was extremely responsive to complaints from residents the event organizers absolutely were not. His overarching conclusions for the event were that hundreds of residents in a one block radius were unnecessarily deprived of the quiet enjoyment of their homes for six consecutive nights. There has been a lot of discussions along the lines "oh, it was only loud for one night". That is not the case. He phoned people in multiple buildings every night and he asked a simple question: how loud is the noise? And the measurement they were using was not decibel levels and such, it was simply "could you watch your TV in peace, could you read a book without being disturbed, or could you listen to your own music without being disrupted". That was our measuring stick, and using that measuring stick, while the sound did fluctuate from night to night it was too loud every night. If you were in the Berczy Condominium the noise was so loud that residents actually moved out of the

building for the entirety of the week. That gives some indication of what residents experienced. At the end of the day residents weren't opposed to the festival but they were opposed to the amplified block party. Now some of the additional impacts that are not noted in his original report were that the Berczy Condominium felt the need to hire and pay for additional security for the week and while some business benefitted, others suffered. A case in point is the Hot House Restaurant as patrons found the patio too noisy during the week-long event.

### **Dennis Glasgow**

Dennis has lived at 30 Wellington for 28 years and has been subjected to motorcycles, high performance cars, events in Berczy, modified exhaust systems, construction, office towers – everything. Nothing was ever as bad as the six days of this event. Dennis thanked Eddy for always responding politely and in good time when contacted by him and his neighbours. In January Councillor Moise sent a letter, proposing amongst other things noise exemptions, a site plan layout of Berczy Park, showing the stage and the access points. One thing that Raymond did not mention that the pinch point at the Berczy was so narrow as to be dangerous in an emergency. It looked as if no professional had ever looked at the arrangements. Raymond and Dennis collaborated on a response letter. Here is part of it: in respect to Elevate/JFL, we welcome the return of theatre shows in 2023. We oppose the return of the amplified block party component of the festival. A well-researched opinion is that an event of this type and scope cannot be held in a predominantly residential neighbourhood without the residents being unreasonably impacted. The block party could reasonably be located in an area with relatively few residents in the immediate vicinity. Top contenders are Dundas Square, Nathan Phillips Square, Front St. between Bay & Yonge, Wellington Street West between Bay & Yonge, and Front Street between Yonge & Bay. The block party could be reimaged as a non-amplified social event and remain on Front Street East of Yonge. There is no reason for it to be returned to Berczy Park.

Dennis then quoted this letter from his condominium Board President Michele LiPuma:

The Board at Wellington opposes the event. The Board does not need additional work monitoring the noise levels of the event, only to have our grievances ignored. We were not consulted at planning or implementation phases, and there was no follow-up. The Wellington Board requires inclusion on any plans for events in the future.

Ken Jackson read the statement of Kenneth Smookler:

Like Ken Jackson, I am also an SLNA Delegate from 30 Wellington Street East. Looking ahead, we would like the following:

- We would ask that delegates and the SLNA support our recommendation to relocate or reimagine the amplified block party
- In the course of working to maintain noise levels that are acceptable to the residents of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, we would suggest that the SLNA consider making representation to the City's forthcoming review of the Noise Bylaw
- To further that purpose, the SLNA may wish to consider joining forces with the Toronto Noise Coalition
- We would appreciate hearing how the SLNA Executive plans to brief delegates and seek input prior to arriving at a final position on the 2023 Elevate/JFL festival. Perhaps a Special Events Committee could be struck to vet events such as this and carry out public consultation.

### **Henry Lotin**

The block party is definitely a net negative for the economic development of the city because during the 6 days the City could not issue film permits, there is no parking for the local business, and the restaurants lost business. I have heard from patrons to that effect. As a landlord I have tenants who work remotely and rely on the use of their various technical equipment at various hours around the world. They were shut down for many hours during the 6 days of the festival and were unable to get work done. The block party should be relocated and be an indoor event.

President Linton thanked everybody for their input, emphasizing that no one supports a repeat of an event like last year's. We have learned from this, and as detailed conversations about future events occur, we will use this experience to create as positive an experience as possible for the neighbourhood.

### **SLNA 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Suzanne Kavanagh**

SLNA's incorporation papers show an incorporation date of February 14, 1983, a most significant milestone in the life of our organization. We will be enjoying a fairly quiet celebration, starting out with letter writing – Love Letters, no less. Suzanne knows how important it is to engage the media, the media are always looking for stories other than chocolates and flowers. And this is also an opportunity for the community to engage and to get together, whether at St. Lawrence Hall or the Market, and write a love letter to our neighbourhood.

On February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to 2 pm we will be at the St. Lawrence Market, North Entrance, in-between the double doors. Some of our board members will be volunteering, along with other volunteers, we'll have tables set up and everyone will have the opportunity to

write their love letter. Part of the branding is the airmail envelope for the letters – we have 1,000 airmail envelopes. Join us for coffee and tea and something to eat. There will be tables and chairs and markers, so stop by as you are shopping and join us in the letter writing process.

As mentioned, the actual date of incorporation is February 14 and for those of you who have never been inside St. Lawrence Hall and particularly The Great Hall, which is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, this is your chance. Join us on Tuesday, February 14, from 10 am to 1 pm in the Great Hall. All of the school children will be joining us, from Market Lane School, Downtown Alternative School and St. Mike’s School. There will be other guests – David Crombie said he would be joining us and will be sitting with the kids and all of us will be writing love letters to the neighbourhood. We have a poster which will be going out on Friday. You can write letters either at the Market or at the St. Lawrence Hall or you can send it via email – the goal is to have 1,000 love letters distributed throughout the community.

When we write these letters we will be working with Lindsey Zier-Vogel, a Toronto-based writer, arts educator and the creator of the internationally-acclaimed Love Lettering Project. She will be working with us and with the children, and if they are unable to print they can draw pictures. After the envelopes are gathered there will be another team of volunteers who will be “scattering” the envelopes about the neighbourhood for others to “find”. Two MPPs will be joining us, Chris Glover and Kristyn Wong Tam, as well as the MP from Spadina-Fort York, Kevin Vuong. Our Councillors and the Mayor won’t be able to make it that day, they will be in the Budget Meeting, so we are hoping that they can send a video of their letter ahead of time, and we’ll put that on our website.

As far as the content of your letter is concerned, the possibilities are endless. It could be about the Parks, your favourite coffee shop, St. Lawrence Market or St. Lawrence Hall. You can write as many letters as you wish and then we will be scattering them around the neighbourhood.

Lindsey puts the word Love on the bottom right-hand corner of her airmail letter, we will do that as well but we’ll get a sticker on the left-hand side that shows St. Lawrence 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As far as scattering is concerned, Suzanne showed a slide with one of the envelopes sticking out of a book in the Library; our Librarian Melissa knows about this and is in fact one of our partners. Other partners are Jamii, Bank of Montreal, the BIA, the St. Lawrence Market, Friends of Berczy Park, Friends of St. James Park as well as Can Stage. They will all be sending the poster to their various networks, encouraging them to come out and write a letter that day. Of course, you can stash the letter anywhere (well, we may have snow), you could also google the Love Lettering Project and get further suggestions.

We are also going to have a contest, we are working on this with St. Lawrence Market and the BIA. We are most likely going to have at least two gift certificates worth \$250 each, and the

one coming from St. Lawrence Market could go towards grocery shopping at the market, and the BIA are still discussing what they could be doing for their neighbourhood.

To get back to envelope scattering – one example is leaving an envelope at Balzacs, at the market, stick it on a tree, attach it to a railing, leave it in your mailroom, the possibilities are endless. Make sure that wherever you stash your letter, it is in a place where it won't get blown away so we won't be littering. If you see an envelope, open it and enjoy the writing inside, and then either put it back or find another spot for it. The trick is to see how long these letters will stay in circulation and then just see what happens. All of this will also be done on social media. There will be 10 LARGE love letters in the neighbourhood, 4 ft tall and 2 ft. wide - take a selfie with a large love letter and you could win a prize. The LARGE letters will go up on February 14 and they will all be in outside locations.

## **JAMII Update**

Isorine is happy to announce Jamii has received a grant from Canada Council for the Arts and they have found a home on the Esplanade. It is located at 264 The Esplanade, right inside the Berkeley Castle and easily accessible, They will be offering sewing workshops on Sundays and have a movement program for older adults on Wednesday from 10 – 11:30, followed by painting workshops the same day, and they are building programming for a variety of age ranges, including young women. Belly dancing was a suggestion made by the community, please get in touch with Jamii if you have any suggestions. There will be a photo exhibition in March which will focus on stories of immigrants to our community that will be told by the children who will be the first generation.

## **Hotel Victoria Update**

Hotel Victoria, 56 Yonge Street, the other shelter hotel in our immediate neighbourhood, will be reverting back to hotel status. The current residents will be relocated to other shelter spaces and it will be closing by the end of February.

## **Development – Community Consultations**

If you wish to attend community consultations on development applications, here are the next few dates (you need to pre-register). Please note that our Development Committee members will be involved but they are not at liberty to publicly comment on any of the details.

- February 9 6-7 69 Yonge St.
- February 9 7-8 15 Richmond Stret East – Cambridge Suites
- Feb. 16 7-8:30 45 The Esplanade

- Not yet scheduled: 110 Adelaide Street East

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/public-consultations/city-planning-consultations/>