



St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association Community Meeting

Held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform

SLNA President Stewart Linton welcomed over 70 community members and delegates to our monthly community meeting. February 28 is a very rich day in history, with many events to choose from, including:

- 202 B.C. the first Han Emperor, Emperor Gaozu (given name Liu Bang), began the Han dynasty in China which ruled China for the next four centuries.
- In 1749 Henry Fielding published Tom Jones – a Foundling. It is in some places acknowledged as the first novel in the English Language.
- In 1906 Bugsy Siegel was born.
- In 1929 Frank Gehry was born – Canadian/American architect and designer.
- In 1953 James Watson and Thomas Crick published The Structure of the DNA molecule. Their work was based on the work of two other people, Rosalind Franklin and a gentleman named Maurice Wilkins who published the very famous Photo 51 which is a very clear indication of the double helix structure of the DNA molecule. Nine years later when the Nobel Prize was awarded it was given to the three surviving members of that group, Rosalind Franklin had passed away in the interim at the very young age of 37 from cancer.

- In 1983 the last episode of Mash aired.
- In 1986 Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme was assassinated. He was a very polarizing figure in both Swedish and European politics. His killer has never been identified nor apprehended.
- In 2013 Pope Benedict the XVI became the first Pope in 600 years to resign while in office.

Sgt. Henry Dyck – TPS – 51 Division

Sgt. Dyck reported that on the whole things look quite good for the neighbourhood – the numbers for the St. Lawrence neighbourhood are down, in particular for violent crime. There are no homicides, unlike last year where there were already two cases by this time. Stabbings are up right now compared to last year but it is not affecting our neighbourhood.

A Community Meeting will be held on March 4 at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Lawrence Community Centre, 230 The Esplanade. The Neighbourhood Community Officers as well as supervisory staff and Sgt. Dyck will be present, as well as City Councillor Chris Moise and other representatives from other levels of government. There are four quarterly meetings a year and this is the first one for the SLNA (Waterfront) neighbourhood.

The CPLC (Community Police Liaison Committee) – SLNA representative Don James has moved out of the neighbourhood and there is the opportunity for someone else to assume that role. Sgt. Dyck reported that the CPLC meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Station and representatives from throughout the Division meet to go over concerns, what the planned initiatives are, and to discuss what is happening in the Division as a whole. The objective is to get a very good cross-section of representation from across the entire Division. The CPLC is granted \$1,000 every year from the Police Services Board to promote and further these efforts which ultimately benefit the community. This year there are plans to hold a large Open House on June 15 at the Station. The CPLC serves as a touch point between the community and the police. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is a submission process for anyone wishing to become a member.

Jade Wang, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Toronto Fire Services

Lithium-Ion Batteries – Jade reported that for the past one or two years lithium-ion battery fires have been popping up more frequently. This is a big headache for The Toronto Fire Services since those kind of fires are different from other fires. They happen quickly, there may be an explosion and the fire is very hard to put out, even for a firefighter. The amount of water necessary to put out a smartphone fire is equivalent to the amount used to put out a townhouse fire.

Lithium-ion batteries are used in smartphones, laptops, tablets, scooters/e-bikes, e-cigarettes and toys and the big ones in our electric vehicles – TESLAs, for example. We live in a world that is surrounded by lithium-ion batteries.

Understanding LI Batteries: These batteries store a large amount of energy in a small amount of space and when energy is released in an uncontrolled manner, it generates heat which makes it dangerous. Why does this happen? Sometimes batteries are not used in the right way. Batteries not designed for a specific use can be dangerous. Like any product, these batteries can be defective and they can overheat, catch fire or explode.

Jade was in charge of the development of lithium-ion battery Safety Sheets. The sheet advises to “stop using the batteries if you notice a change in odour or colour, change in shape, heat or noise. Follow your Home Escape Plan and call 911 once you are safely outside”. So, if you have a lithium battery at home and discover that it starts to heat up, leaking or you hear noise emanating from the battery, leave right away and call 911. Jade showed the example of an E-scooter being charged in a bedroom which had been overcharged for an hour and 43 minutes. The infrared camera showed ignition and smoke, then the fire started to build up and within 15 seconds there was a full explosion.

How do we avoid this from happening in our home? Purchase and use devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory like UL or ULC. There are a lot of e-scooters that you can buy from Amazon, as an example, or from a street market and those products are not necessarily UL or ULC certified. For all devices, only use the battery and charging cord that came with the device. Charge devices like smartphones, laptops and tablets on a hard surface like a desk, table or counter. Do not keep charging the device or device battery after it is fully charged. A lot of

smartphones stop charging after the battery is full, so this refers primarily to an e-scooter, an e-bike or a toy – unplug so you are not overcharging the battery. Store and charge e-bikes and scooters away from exit doors.

Signs of a problem: Stop using the battery if there is unusual odour, change in colour, too much heat, change in shape, leaking, noise and damage. If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire.

Battery Disposal: Do NOT put lithium-ion batteries in the trash, take them to a battery recycling location. *[Editor's note: SLNA/WRG's REmarket, for example.]* The trash could go into a landfill and be exposed to the sun and potentially catch on fire.

Toronto Fire is in the middle of preparing a safety campaign, to be launched in the summer. There will also be increased social media campaigns. Every time the Fire Safety Educators speak to an audience they include the lithium-ion battery safety tips. E-charging stations are required to get a permit and it is done by code. The chance of an e-charging station catching on fire is very low. Lithium-ion batteries function best if they are being charged from 20% to 80%. Here is the link to the Tip Sheet: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/981a-TFS-Lithium-Ion-Battery-Tip-Sheet-Sept-2023-.pdf>

Waterfront Toronto – Mira Shenker, Director, Communications and Public Engagement

Update: The new Don River Mouth and its bridges

Mira presented an historical aerial picture of the project area showing contamination from industrial uses, showing the Keating Channel and the oil storage tankers that contributed a lot to the pollution that has been dealt with as part of this project. It showed the Polson slip, which now functions as the new mouth of the Don River. 240 hectares in the Port Lands area were at risk of flooding in the event of a major storm. Another slide showed the design solution – Port Lands in Summer 2025 – that came out of an International Design Competition that Waterfront Toronto launched, to extend the Don River South and then West to the Port Lands into what was the Polson slip. In response to an

audience question Mira mentioned that none of the parks will be open this year, at least not until the end of the year. The plants and the trees need to be mature and this all takes some time. Spring/Summer 2025 is the expected opening for all the parks.

Mira then presented further images, including Promontory Park, and discussed the planning and development of the Villiers Island neighborhood, emphasizing the mix of uses and the consideration of appropriate scale and density. She also mentioned the implementation of truck management strategies and the welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users.

<https://mailchi.mp/waterfrontoronto/february-2024-newsletter?e=5760b5d75a>

Single Use and Take Away Items New Bylaw takes effect March 1, 2024 – Donna Patterson

Donna introduced herself as one of the members of the SLNA Waste Reduction Group, a standing committee of SLNA which started in 2019. She reported that the group essentially started in 2019 wanting to better understand the meaning of “recycling”. They began to understand that recycling per se is not the issue, we need to reduce our garbage and make greater use of reusables.

Why is it important to reduce our single use and take away items (which is what the City is talking about it in this new bylaw which comes into effect on March 1)? Single use and take away items require valuable resources and energy to produce, collect, process and dispose of. Single use accessory items such as straws, napkins, stir sticks, eating utensils, beverage trays and condiment packages are generally not recyclable nor compostable and are commonly just litter items. All of these single use items are very bad for the environment, for waste reduction, for birds and wildlife. A lot of people don't know that half of all plastics are single use plastics and only 9% of plastics are recycled globally, especially disposable coffee cups. A lot of people think that they are recyclable because they are paper cups, but they have a plastics liner inside to keep the coffee hot which means they are not recyclable. In Canada 1.6 billion disposable cups go into the landfill every year.

The City of Toronto has been working for many years on this single-use and take away bylaw; public consultations had been held for many years and the City was about to come out with some new rules and bylaws before Covid, which delayed everything. This is why the process feels longer than it actually took. The new single use and take away bylaw comes into effect, March 1, 2024. It requires businesses to allow customers to bring in their own reusable cups and their own reusable bags.

A second requirement is called “ask first”. It requires businesses to ask customers if they want single use food accessory items with their order. They will no longer provide these items automatically with a customer’s order, instead they are required to ask if the customer actually requires the items. Customers can also ask for the items to be included with their order. Donna feels that a lot of people are like her – she doesn’t require the cutlery, she doesn’t require serviettes, she is taking all of it home and will use her own utensils. So this is what this new bylaw is trying to work on. The single use accessory food items that are included are plastic utensils, straws, stir sticks, napkins, condiment packages, cup sleeves and cup trays, as well as paper bags. The businesses will have to ask customers if they require a paper bag, and if the customer requires one they can ask the business.

The City of Toronto will be doing a lot of education and outreach for both businesses, so they understand the process, as well as residents, so we all understand it. The City also has introduced the Circular Food Innovators Fund that is helping to support local businesses in their transition towards eliminating single use and take away items.

In the St. Lawrence neighbourhood we were going to start a process in February of 2020 – deferred due to Covid – called St. Lawrence Reduces. It is based on Roncy Reduces and we have asked businesses if they will allow us to bring in our own cups, containers and bags. The businesses that have signed up for this program have small green stickers on their doors for “*St. Lawrence Reduces*”. We have signed up more than 38 businesses and continue to sign up more. Based on this pre-work, the Waste Reduction Group is very excited and very happy to see the arrival of this new bylaw and would like to see it go even farther, but the City will still be doing more consultations next year for Phase 3 of the program and then they’ll start to look at reusable containers and other things.

Let's talk a little bit more about reusables because that is what St. Lawrence is promoting. Reusables – rather than single use take-out – have a lot of benefits. They reduce waste. It takes a lot less water to produce a reusable item than a single use item which just goes into the garbage after it has been used only once. It is not only better for the environment it is also better for business. If I take my reusable cup into a business they don't have to buy a paper cup that goes into the garbage, thereby saving money. As well they save space because they don't have to store those disposable cups. Many businesses in our neighbourhood, especially those that have signed up to St. Lawrence Reduces, offer a discount if we bring our own reusable cup or container. Many of the coffee shops offer some kind of a discount. So if you take your reusable container or cup into a local business don't hesitate to ask them if they give you a discount. Donna shared that the Pasta/Pizza place gives a dollar off if we use our own container.

So, we are celebrating Reusable Cup Day on Friday. One of our designers has done a flyer for us and we are working with Canada Reduces and other similar organizations, talking to the coffee shops in the neighbourhood. Some of our local businesses will be giving away reusable coffee cups if anyone is looking for this (supply is limited). This is done because we want to promote the idea that people can bring reusables into the coffee shops. Here is a list of the local coffee shops that have signed up for this:

- Balzac's Coffee Roasters (10 Market Street)
- Berkeley Café (262 The Esplanade)
- The Black Canary Espresso Bar (61 Sherbourne Street)
- Everyday Gourmet Coffee Roasters (St. Lawrence Market Lower Level)
- Luba's Coffee Boutique (St. Lawrence Market, Upper Level)
- Rooster Coffee House (343 King St. East)

To sum up, the two main items under the new Bylaw are:

- businesses are now required to accept our reusable cups and our reusable bags (reusable containers will be coming next year)
- the second item is the "ask first" requirement regarding single use things such as cutlery, containers and stir sticks.

A lot of residents don't know about this yet, (nor do all of the businesses), so the City of Toronto will provide a lot of education.

- Question from the audience – will the businesses who have signed up be giving us feedback? Can we track the success of this in some other way? Donna responded that we are actually running an eight week program where we are going around and surveying the businesses and we have a bunch of questions for them.
- Another question from the audience – the federal government started this process of single use plastics and somehow was impeded by a challenge from the plastics industry – how does this all connect with the federal initiative? Donna responded that indeed big plastic organizations did take the federal government to court, and they won, but the federal government appealed and the court gave a stay motion. The federal government is appealing the decision – which was a provincial court decision – and the court said the ban is still in effect. So the ban is still in effect, banning what the federal government calls “the 6 worst offenders” which are some of the single use take out containers - the black plastic (which cannot be recycled) and Styrofoam which is very low grade and the City can't sell it to anybody. Plastic bags, straws (with some exceptions for people with disabilities), plastic single use cutlery and stir sticks, followed by the 6-pack beverage rings that go on beer cans.

One of the things that the City has been saying recently is that depending on where the federal ban stands next year the City of Toronto may consider banning some of these worst offenders. The British Columbia government has banned a number these things, so the City of Toronto could do this as well. The court decided that the federal ban is still in effect. In the legislation the Federal government had said that plastics are a toxic waste.

Back to the 6 businesses that are already in the St. Lawrence Reduces program, each of them have 8 – 10 cups available to give to customers on Friday, and the whole idea is to promote what we are calling Reusable Cup Day. Tim Hortons and Starbucks are giving a discount if you are bringing your own cup and McDonalds accepts Tupperware.

Annual General Meeting – March 27, 2024

There will be individual emails as well but the agenda includes:

- Approval of previous minutes; approval of 2023 financial statements
- Special meeting of members: resolution not to require financial audit for 2024
- Election of Directors. There are four positions available for 3-year terms and we encourage people to apply who have an interest in shaping and moving our Association forward to consider serving on the Board.
 - Remember that you need to be a Delegate to run for the Board.
 - Buildings are members and buildings have Delegates.
 - Not all of the member buildings have all of their Delegate positions filled, so it is possible that your building has an opening for a delegate.

Role of Delegates:

- Decision makers
- Be active, be informed, be respectful
- Represent, communicate and participate in whatever ways you can.

Thanks to the Delegates and we look forward to seeing you at the meeting next month. If you are interested in serving on the Board, the by-laws allow for self-nomination. In practice, most nominations are self-nominations .

Alex Miller-Gerrard – Director, Toronto’s First Post Office

Alex wanted to share some information about their upcoming Fundraiser. Every year, the Town of York Historical Society celebrates the incorporation of the City of Toronto with a fundraising bash. Toronto’s First Post Office is operated by the Town of York’s Historical Society. This year’s annual fundraising gala to celebrate Toronto’s 190th Birthday will be held on Thursday, March 7th at St. Lawrence Hall, 157 King Street East from 6 – 10 pm.

Unveiling Toronto’s Architectural Tapestry: A History of Toronto’s Changing Landscape

Join us for a captivating evening of exploration and celebration at the Town of York Historical Society’s annual fundraising gala in celebration of Toronto’s 190th Birthday. This event not only commemorates the incorporation of the City of Toronto

but also serves as a significant opportunity to support the preservation of our rich historical heritage. Delve into the evolving architectural scene of the Town of York and the City of Toronto, as we emphasize the importance of built heritage in shaping the identity of our beloved city.

There will be an engaging line-up of speakers:

- **Summer Leigh** – The Past is never far and “Envision TO”
 - Summer is a Toronto-based artist. Using archival material and her innovative photographic process, Summer compares and contrasts the relationships between past and present, showcasing the extraordinary experiences Toronto has experienced since its founding.
- **Adam Bunch** – Stories of Toronto Architects, Artists, and Contributions
 - Award-winning storyteller Adam Bunch, known for his compelling narratives about Toronto and Canadian history, will captivate the audience with tales of Toronto architects, artists, and their enduring contributions. As the recipient of the Governor General’s History Award for Popular Media, Adam’s storytelling expertise brings history to life.
- **Alessandro Tersigni** – Exploring the TOBuilt Database
 - Alessandro, a cultural critic and writer-researcher at ERA Architects, will share insights into the TOBuilt database—a crowd-sourced treasure trove of images and information about buildings, structures and human-made landscapes in Toronto. Discover the city’s architectural heritage through Alessandro’s expertise, gained from his role as a project manager at the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario’s Toronto branch.

Doors open at 6, the event begins at 6:30. Councillor Moise will be joining us around the 6:30 mark as well.

There was an audience question about accessible entrance to Toronto’s First Post Office, and the accessible entrance is through the back of the building.

<https://townofyork.com/fundraiser/>

Comments from the Audience

Ronny Yaron expressed a desire for more representation from Toronto Community Housing in the SLNA meetings, and on the Board.

Stewart and Suzanne agreed with Ronny's points, emphasizing the opportunity for more board representation from Toronto housing and co-ops.

Suzanne announced the development of a new senior resource center on the second floor of the North Market. A working group held its first meeting to discuss potential programming and physical space.

Candace raised concerns about potential changes to the Crombie Revitalization plan. The land was negotiated to be used by the Toronto Public Library for a 5-story building.

The next meeting of the SLNA is the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on March 27, 2024 at 7 pm.