

# SLNA DELEGATES MEETING

## July 25, 2007

### OWN CO-OP, 115 The Esplanade

UPDATE THE ATTENDANCE!!

#### Executive Members in Attendance:

President: Paul Smith, St. Lawrence on the Park  
Secretary: Ani Kounavis, 25 The Esplanade  
VP External: Harry Renaud, 135 George St  
VP Internal: Ronny Yaron, Woodsworth Co-op  
At Large: Wallace Simpson, Crombie Park  
At Large: Dan O'Leary, 15 Scadding

#### REGRETS:

At Large: Jacquie Williams, Old York Tower  
Treasurer: Bruno Leps, Market Square

#### Voting Delegates in Attendance:

Leo Agosto, Marketview Housing Co-op  
Patricia Bearclaw, Cathedral Court Co-op  
Joan Boyd, PAL  
Keith Bricknell, The Metropole  
Hugh Francis-Burns, Longboat Residents  
Joan Campbell, Market Square  
Jennifer Chan, Windmill Line Co-op  
Elizabeth Ecker, St. Lawrence on the Park  
Karl Froehr, Windmill Line Co-op  
Aurie Hensman, Olde York Place 1  
Oleg Holowaty, 25 George St

George Millbrandt, Longboat Residents  
Ronald Monteith, Woodsworth Co-op  
Anne Moore, 71 Front St East  
Loralie Olinyk, Harmony Homes Housing Co-op  
Sherri Russell, FAN  
Alan Seymour, Old York Tower  
Robert Sherrin, Abbey Lofts  
Sara Teng, King's Court  
Frank Touby, Harmony A Housing  
Connie Yang, O.W.N.

#### REGRETS:

#### Associate Members & Guests :

Arthur Alda, O.W.N  
Tom Davidson, Pam McConnell's office  
John Kennaley, George Smitherman's office  
Ed Majchrowski, TCHC Representative  
Ed Nixon, Windmill Line Co-op  
Tim Rourke, 15 Scadding

#### Guest Speakers:

Caroline Homann, Royal Bank of Canada  
Mark Galbraith, Royal Bank of Canada

Arlyss Ponchuk, Recording Secretary

#### ACRONYMS:

**BIA**: Business Improvement Area  
**CMHC**: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
**CFOT**: Citizens for the Old Town  
**CPLC**: Community Police Liaison Committee  
**DAS**: Downtown Alternative School  
**HRSDC**: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
**LEED**: Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design  
**OMB**: Ontario Municipal Board

**OTTN**: Old Town Toronto Network  
**PSB**: Police Services Board  
**SEDERI**: South East Downtown Economic Redevelopment Initiative

**SLCRC**: St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre

**SLM:** St. Lawrence Market

**SLMN-BIA:** St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area

**SLNA:** St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

**TABIA:** Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)

**TCHC:** Toronto Community Housing Corporation

**TIACAC:** Toronto Island Airport Community Advisory Committee

**TPA:** Toronto Port Authority

**TWRC:** Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Committee

## 1. Registration and Refreshments

## 2. Opening Remarks, Approval of the Agenda & Approval of June Minutes

VP-External Harry Renaud called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm, and chaired the meeting. He deferred agenda item #2 to follow MPP George Smitherman's appearance.

## 3. Minister George Smitherman (MPP) to Speak

The Chair introduced George Smitherman, who asked to set aside formalities and call him George.

George stated that he is excited about campaigning for the provincial elections on October 10, and looks forward to debating other candidates for their vision for Ontario. He anticipates the SLNA sponsoring an All-Candidates meeting, and asked that it be scheduled soon as the campaign will be very active.

George stated that his duties as Minister of Health can at times overwhelm his other responsibilities, but from his perspective being an MPP comes first, and he is happy to speak to any questions about the neighbourhood that makes up his riding.

As of the fall elections the boundaries of this riding will change to match the boundaries of the federal riding. "Rosedale" will be removed from the name of the riding.

George described his and his party's commitments: to attend to development pressures caused by population growth in the riding; to continue to rebuild public services, and to introduce substantive policies regarding supporting aging at home through local services for which OVN is a model.

George responded to questions:

**Aging at home:** Local health integration networks will work with local communities to introduce \$7 million in the next three years. This is in response to seniors' request to live out their lives in the homes they have now rather than move to facilities for seniors. Funds will go toward

encouraging local communities to provide resources through volunteerism and informal networks, such as the hospice community, rather than only to regulated health professionals.

**Methadone Task Force:** George has released to the public domain today the Methadone Task Force report. The first phase of the response seeks to build on primary recommendations. One major recommendation, contrary to the Ministry of Health's perspective, is establishing widespread methadone clinics to provide services close to the homes of Ontarians in need, rather than requiring people to travel great distances to centralized locations in a warehousing effect. Many more practitioners will be encouraged to participate, and clinics will be regulated appropriately. Information will be communicated more clearly to communities to encourage community engagement. The report will be available on George's website. A public meeting will take place in Corktown, site of a methadone clinic relocated from SLN, to convey the Ministry of Health's intentions in responding to the report.

**Private healthcare:** "The bias of our government is a status quo in terms of overall volumes. We have not sought out opportunities to expand private delivery. There are many on offer." George prefers to use business principles to determine over time what provides the best service at the best price, and to require accountability for funding provided.

**Principles governing healthcare dollars, given that the greatest expense is in the first and last years of life:** Aging people and people with underlying chronic disease are significant drivers of health care costs. The Ministry of Health is

developing an end-of-life strategy that includes residential hospices (under construction), more support for end-of-life care through community care centres, and more capacity in hospitals. If a family expresses a wish to sustain the life of an individual, the healthcare system does so. Costs run high when healthcare is based on families' request for heroic intervention to sustain life which might have largely run its course. Changing people's perceptions to allow for an inevitable death requires a cultural shift. Perhaps the will to save lives can be expressed through organ donations. Premature babies, the effect of reproductive technologies, also require months of intensive healthcare. The healthcare system is under pressure both to provide both timely services and these intensive services.

***Reproductive technologies leading to babies requiring intensive healthcare, leading to children requiring special needs programs in school:*** OHIP provides little coverage to overcome infertility. It may be possible to manage infertility programs better to reduce multiple births, which put a strain on the healthcare system. With new technologies, intervention is possible for rare medical conditions, but costs run extremely high. "It used to be you just had to live with it; now we're in a world with solutions being discovered and we try to bring them into play."

***Poverty and lack of affordable housing are hard on the healthcare system; Dr. Hazel Stuart has an idea for dental care coverage for the poor:*** George has worked with Dr. Stuart to profile her idea for all of Ontario. "Yes, poverty is an underlying contributor to deterioration in health." George is working with community services in this riding that reach down to address individual circumstances. For example, he created 35 units in support of mental health by using agencies and shelter allowances rather than bricks and mortar. "Those beds are up and running. We're happy with the result." The government has begun again to invest in housing. "Housing is one of the most pressing challenges we face." The renewal of Regent Park is exciting in terms of public housing stock. The government has launched this month

the Ontario Childcare Benefit, which will provide cash monthly to low-income families with children. Resources have been allocated to a shelter subsidy to give \$100 per month to families to assist with housing costs.

***Funding model for schools:*** Despite corrective adjustments, funding formulas will always be imperfect. There are hundreds of school boards and thousands of schools. As a result individual circumstances are overlooked. Toronto is seeing a decline in school enrolment, yet people do not want to see local schools close.

***Educational tax on businesses*** Charging businesses an education tax affects the competitiveness of business in Toronto and provides minimal if any additional benefits to Toronto. Therefore the most recent Budget includes a first step toward reducing this tax burden. "As a former retailer I'm sensitive to the cost of doing business in Toronto."

***Hospital management must expand to analyze new and changing government requirements; this is not cost effective:***

***An aging population of front line hospital workers feel that innovations are at their expense:***

***Will the government restructure the hospital board system or change to regional boards:***

154 distinct hospital corporations with local governance and traditions use their own different criteria to select board members. There is a perception that regional boards would empower the government over the hospitals. In four years' time the Ministry of Health has developed a good working relationship with hospitals, empowering them and giving smaller hospitals confidence as to the role they play in providing specialized services. The government does require from hospitals accountability for dollars spent. The government's intention is to provide service where service is needed, which at times means changes to services as local population needs change. "Every hospital in Ontario has received more money every year we've been in office . . . But there are 300,000 people working in healthcare

and any change or alteration in services is often characterized as a cut.”

***Prostate cancer / North York Branson Hospital:***

NYBH was an acute care hospital; the hospital was reduced when Wellesley closed. The prostate program at NYBH is being rebuilt, and will be shared by different hospitals. There is no clinical consensus to make available to asymptomatic men a new test for prostate cancer as the test is not always reliable and has resulted in some unnecessary surgeries. “Keep your eyes posted on what we might be able to do as we build capacity to support testing.” George thanked for his feedback a Delegate who stated, “the staff at Branson are delighted—a few years ago their spirit was down, now they’re happy.”

***What happened to paying salaries to doctors?***

***Under the fee-for-service model, doctors see 4-5 patients per hour and cannot diagnose effectively in 10 minutes:*** The Ministry of Health has moved many doctors away from the fee-for-service model

**7. Report from Pam McConnell’s Office — Tom Davidson**

The Chair introduced Tom Davidson. Tom reported and responded to questions.

Discussions continue with Cathedral Court Co-op regarding GO train construction next to their building. An electrical transformer is being relocated from next to their property line to the south side of the track.

Brickwork in sidewalks along The Esplanade is being replaced. The west side of the intersection of Frederick Street and The Esplanade is being re-leveled to prevent rainwater or melting snow from pooling there.

The Women’s Resource Centre on Adelaide Street will still be used as a transitional location for assigning housing to homeless men before the men’s service is moved to its new location at Peter Street, but use of the women’s site will be shorter than planned because the current location on Edward Street is staying open longer than expected. Drop-in services for the men will take

of the family physician as primary care giver. But for many doctors that is still their mode of practice. The Ministry of Health has introduced Family Health Teams, matching nurse practitioners, mental health workers, dietitians, etc. with doctors, so that the array of care is more comprehensive, and the doctor can focus on intervention that he only is best equipped to provide. “We invested \$600 million of your money in 150 family health teams.” The Ministry of Health plans to expand that model. “When we came to office the proportion of physicians willing to take up family practice, residency training, were not being filled, and now they are. We have dramatically renewed primary care . . . We see doctors coming out of our schools intending to work here . . . 500,000 more Ontarians have access to family health care.”

The Chair thanked George Smitherman. Delegates applauded.

George Smitherman left the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

**Tom Davidson**

place at night and services for women will take place during the day, so that they will not overlap.

Splash pads are being repaired throughout the city. At the request of Elisabeth Ecker, Tom will arrange to have the water fountain in front of Market School and 65 Scadding repaired.

Now that the two proposed new city taxes have been voted down, the Mayor is making more of a case about needing funding from other levels of government to meet the fiscal needs of Toronto.

A person asked why the floodlight for the Berczy Park statue is not working. At Tom’s suggestion, she will contact Councillor McConnell’s office, to have the Parks Department look into it.

The same person congratulated the City for the spectacular and beautiful gardens of St. James Park. Tom explained that a benefactor left a trust to pay for the space, and that the Parks Department maintains the site and a Garden Club

attends to its history. An official opening of the heritage gardens was held a couple of weeks ago, with a presentation by the original landscape architect commissioned to create the space.

A person asked Councillor Pam McConnell's record for reducing costs in her own office and in the City. Tom responded that Pam's office constantly looks at efficiencies in terms of the City budget. The City budget is in a magnitude of hundreds of millions of dollars so that much larger measures than small savings alone are needed to create a fundamental fix. He added that each City Councillor receives an annual office budget of \$53,000. The downtown ward comprises so much dynamic work that Pam has four staff members rather than the usual three.

Wendy Devine objected to the destruction of the Butterfly Garden, noting that the plants should have been better protected from pedestrians and children. Dan O'Leary of the SLNA's Gardening Committee acknowledged the loss for this year, and added that it will be replanted.

The City's new waste and recycling program is not overbudgeted. Costs are to be recovered through a different fee system, taken off general property tax, with a discrete fee system for each receptacle, so that the program is not at a cost to the City.

## **2. Opening Remarks, Approval of the Agenda &**

Amendment to the agenda: no update on smartliving St. Lawrence (agenda item #4) as Ben Marans has left smartliving to join the Toronto Atmospheric Fund.

***Motion: to approve the Agenda as amended.***

***Moved by: Keith Bricknell***

***Seconded by: Alan Seymour***

***CARRIED***

Joan Campbell will give the Corporate Secretary minor changes to the minutes such as name spellings and page formatting.

The budget for police is no longer a "black hole" now that Pam McConnell sits on the PSB. The PSB now conducts a line-by-line examination of the police budget. 93% of the budget is spent on police salaries. The only easy way to cut money is to cut services, which no one wants to do.

Tom advised that the City's bureaucracy is not a "bloated administrative population," that some departments are chronically understaffed.

The intersection at Front and Sherbourne is a bleak corner. The City plans to redo the streetscape along Lower Sherbourne from Front Street southward next year.

A person asked whether the Island Airport, which will increase its traffic, will get heavily taxed, representing a source of income for the City; and whether its monetary needs are covered by the City. Tom responded that the TPA owns the land and manages the contracts and pays taxes to the City, but there is considerable legal wrangling over unpaid taxes.

Tom explained that air traffic at night, which is bothersome to residents, is within the regulations as reported at a recent SLNA meeting. SLNA delegates applauded Aurie Hensman's recommendation that the City dictate to the TPA rather than the other way around.

## **Approval of June Minutes**

***Motion: to approve the June minutes as presented.***

***Moved by: Karl Froehr***

***Seconded by: Cherrill Baker***

***CARRIED***

Under business arising from the minutes, James Childs proposed that Toronto follow the lead of countries in Europe that contracts Bombardier for energy- and environmentally-efficient public transit. He proposed that the SLNA meet with other organizations to lobby for Bombardier as the city's contractor for transit vehicles. The Chair asked if James Child would like to champion this

cause through the SLNA, and James offered to do so.

Ronny Yaron announced a rally on Saturday, July 28 at City Hall, for citizens to support TTC lines as is, without decreased services.

#### **4. Update on Smartliving — Ben Marans**

No report.

#### **5. Report on Safety in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood**

Keith Bricknell reported, with reference to a written report.

A Town Hall Meeting took place on June 18 to discuss the Toronto Drug Strategy. Speakers were present only on behalf of enforcement and harm reduction, not prevention and treatment. The meeting was at times acrimonious. Hot button items included a program for needle exchanges and free distribution of crack pipes and kits as a healthcare and harm reduction measure. In Keith's opinion, the most serious problem of the meeting was a public administration issue of aligning what the service providers want to do with what the public is willing to tolerate. The Federal Government has withdrawn funding from harm reduction programs, reflecting community anger. Anger is blurring the possibility of solutions.

At the CPLC's regular meeting on July 16, a guest Chair of another CPLC cancelled. The Toronto

East Downtown Neighbourhood Alliance offered its blog site at <http://tedna.informe.com> (main site [www.tedna.ca](http://www.tedna.ca)) for people to present arguments and seek to influence policy regarding the matters that arose at the Town Hall Meeting on June 18.

Crime statistics for 2006 can be viewed at [www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-002-XIE/85-002-XIIE2007005.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-002-XIE/85-002-XIIE2007005.htm).

In response to an objection to the style of report, the Chair supported Keith's report, which includes both factual reportage and personal analysis.

James Childs advised that in recent months he and other members of Caroline Co-op have conducted walkabouts of their garage and have effectively cleared the premises of drugs and prostitution. "This does not happen unless people like us get involved and do little things in our own area."

#### **6. Report from George Smitherman's Office — John Kennaley**

See agenda item #3.

#### **7. Report from Pam McConnell's Office — Tom Davidson**

See above, after agenda item #3.

#### **8. Other Business**

##### **a) Gardening – Dan O'Leary**

GO Transit has met with the local community to discuss the embankments, ie. the lands that extend from property lines to railway tracks, which are part of GO Transit's reconstruction project. As a pilot project, the SLN's Gardening Committee might tend different kinds of gardens that GO will fund to be planted on the embankments. Dan described this as the first ever encounter between a

community group and a rail line to allow a mutual decision as to what to plant on embankments. GO will hire a landscape architect. Different properties backing onto the rail lands can have a say in how their section of embankment will be planted and whether or how access might be made. Planting might occur next spring.

Delegates pointed out to Dan that GO is the primary beneficiary, as planting will reduce erosion and the community would be responsible for maintenance. Nevertheless, the SLN would see more gardens as a result. GO should be asked to allocate funds for annual operating costs. Joan Campbell will consider attending future meetings.

George Milbrandt reported that a local group is identifying and creating a map of diseased and dead trees along The Esplanade for forestry people to follow-up on this fall. Perhaps if this initiative goes well, other streets in the SLN could be similarly mapped.

More funds are available to rebuild the Butterfly Garden this year. The Children's Garden has an official City Parks sign now. The Gardening Committee has dog, youth, and plant subcommittees. The committee proposes to hold as a fundraiser a tour of local buildings to view gardens.

#### **9. Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm.

The SLNA acknowledges the Hot House Café for sponsoring this evening's refreshments, and OWN for hosting tonight's meeting.

The next Delegates meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 26 at 7:00 pm, location to be announced.

There is no meeting in August.

#### b) SLCRC – Sherri Russell

SLCRC is holding a Family Day summer picnic on August 18, as the SLNA is not holding its annual picnic this year. Sherri will send the Corporate Secretary a flyer to email to Delegates. The SLCRC Advisory Board is not meeting for the summer months. The SLCRC, however, continues to be busy with activities for kids with new programs almost every day.

#### c) Fair Vote Canada – Sherri Russell

Sherri Russell made available brochures for Fair Vote Ontario. The Chair noted that the Referendum scheduled for October 10 is on the agenda for the Delegates Meeting in September.

#### d) Women of Promise Youth Mission Trip to Africa: Fundraiser

A flyer was distributed for a fundraiser on August 19 at St. James Park.

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**Corporate Secretary**

**President**