



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

**Held on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform**

SLNA President Stewart Linton welcomed 60 community members and delegates to the September 2022 SLNA Community Meeting.

### **51 Division Update – Sgt. Henry Dyck**

A few updates – the Novotel is going to be handed back to the Silver Group owner at the end of December and they are not admitting any new clients at this point. The Novotel will no longer be used as a respite site, and efforts are underway to find housing for the current residents. There was a news release from the City in this regard and Ryan Evershed has been doing a good job in communicating this information to the community.

As for our neighbourhood, Break and Enters and Common Mischiefs are actually down for the month, which is good news. From the Toronto Police Service stand point the Just For Laughs event was a roaring success and very well attended, and there were no issues to speak of. It brought lots of people to the neighbourhood and gave the businesses an opportunity to recover from the lengthy period of inactivity due to covid. In response to an audience comment about the high noise level the neighbourhood experienced Sergeant Dyck stated that noise complaints are strictly a bylaw (City) responsibility and not a policing issue.

Safety and security issues were discussed with the Distillery individuals responsible for the Christmas Market that brings literally hundreds of thousands of people to the neighbourhood

from the middle of November to the end of December, always very well attended. Traffic management is going to be a challenge. Although their website and other communications constantly stress that the use of TTC is the best way to go, there are still lots of people that prefer using vehicles, particularly visitors coming from out of town, and it gets very congested in the neighbourhood, There will definitely be a considerable increase in traffic congestion during that time. In answer to a question about possible parking signs to limit vehicles to those with permits Sgt. Dyck responded that for any event of this size a traffic management plan has to be submitted and approved by the City. Any signage would be done through that plan that is undertaken by those seeking the permit and the City which grants it.

There were a less frequent number of complaints about traffic and inappropriate driving along The Esplanade. We are currently working with a new program that has a number of people in a special course for three months of traffic training and I have asked them to spend a little bit more time along The Esplanade. We undertook a very large campaign to try to get the message out there and do some enforcement, which did seem to have worked for a good period of time, it is now slowly creeping back and Sgt. Dyck has asked the traffic training participants to do enforcement in that specific area along The Esplanade.

There are some upcoming Town Hall meetings that are taking place in regards to race-based data collection. There are going to be two in 51 Division, dates and times have not been announced yet. There are other meetings throughout the City. Neither one of the two meetings in 51 Division will be held directly in the SLNA neighbourhood, but you are certainly welcome to attend and Sgt. Dyck will communicate the dates and times when they are available, likely in January. One meeting will take place in Regent Park and the other one at Wellesley and Sherbourne.

## **45 The Esplanade – Questions and Answers – Ryan Evershed**

At this point President Linton invited Ryan Evershed, Manager of Community Engagement and Client Programming for Homes First to participate in answering any questions that might overlap with 51 Division responsibilities. Ryan confirmed that intakes for the program have officially stopped at 45 The Esplanade, and they have referred as many people as possible to different avenues. The main focus at this point is winding down some of the programs, and the entire frontline staff and volunteers are trying to assist with finding housing, working with service and community partners in trying to make sure that this transition is as smooth as possible. It is very busy and hectic at the moment, and 84 people have secured housing since the program started, and the organization has received recent additional support from the City, from Central Intake, from Streets to Homes and from their own staff.

One question is raised frequently – how are people doing – it is good and bad for a lot of people, it is a very traumatic process to all of a sudden find a new place to live. In many cases this hotel model was the perfect place for many residents. It is a stressful time for people. The main goal is to secure permanent, affordable and/or supportive housing. Supportive housing is the most appropriate for most of the 45 The Esplanade residents, which requires connecting with other social agencies. A lot of people have been housed in the private market as well, and in some cases there are no supports, but on the whole there are follow-up supports in place and we have been building up the follow-up support teams to connect people living in the private market with the services they had on site and with some of the relevant agencies in their new area.

If you would like to donate, please contact [ryan.evershed@homesfirst.on.ca](mailto:ryan.evershed@homesfirst.on.ca). You may also donate gift cards (grocery, Tim's Dollarama), backpacks, small gifts for the holidays, socks, warm winter wear, underwear for both men and women in all sizes, gloves, sweaters, boots, etc. Also please check out Homes for Dinner: <https://homesfordinner.ca/>

In answer to a question if three individuals who are sleeping and living on the street every day can be housed somewhere, you can dial 311 anytime if you have concerns about someone sleeping on the street but remember they are not obligated to accept shelter even if it is offered. Shelter respite space is limited, capacity is an issue right now.

## **St. Lawrence Market Precinct (District) Update – Suzanne Kavanagh, Nancy Chater**

Suzanne is the Chair and SLNA Representative for the Advisory Committee of the St. Lawrence Market Precinct, soon to be renamed to St. Lawrence Market District. The boundaries are St. Lawrence Market – south market, the new North Market building, St. Lawrence Hall which is a national historic site, situated North of the North Market, Market Lane Park, Market Street and the temporary market tent block. Esplanade-Jarvis-Wilton-Market. All of that encompasses the precinct, now to be called District.

Suzanne then introduced Nancy Chater, Senior Project Manager with the City, who has been leading the discussion about Market Lane Park which also belongs to the Precinct, soon to be called the District. Nancy provided us with a quick update on the Market Lane Park Improvement Project. She is currently leading four Parks and Recreation capital projects and some of the SLNA members have been part of the consultation and engagement process that we undertook and we had a series of three public meetings and three stakeholder meetings, which included the SLNA. She reports that they arrived at a very beautiful and striking concept plan for the park which kind of ended up sort of merging and marrying elements of different

plan options that were shown to the community. There was a lot of support for the curvy linear organic shapes which is a reference to water and the former Ontario shoreline.

The park is going to be an open paved park, as it is today, all the paving will be new and quite beautiful, with lots of seating. The trees are a very important part of the character, the beautiful double-row of trees, called an Allee, will be maintained and enhanced. Some of the trees will be removed and new trees will be replanted of the same species as the existing trees, they are called honey locusts. They make a great canopy in the park since they have small leaves which will create a dappled light.

Nancy reports that a lot of attention is being paid to the trees, how to protect the existing trees, how to create new trees where some robust growth is anticipated. It is always painful to remove trees, they will primarily remove existing trees that are in poor health, starting to decline and will be negatively impacted by the construction. A good example of trees that were removed and replaced in optimal growing conditions is in Berczy Park, where in only five years a beautiful canopy has formed along the South side of Berczy Park where the chairs are.

In addition there will be beautiful paving, trees, lots of seating of different kinds, benches, tables and chairs for groups of people who can sit and eat. There will be entry features at the North and South end. At the South end is a cluster of fairly large Ontario boulders, which is a reference to the boulders that were dragged down and refers to the geological history of the area. There is going to be a water feature, the boulders will be core-drilled, the water will bubble up through the rock and then pour down over the rock, creating a very pleasant gentle sound and then it will disappear into a drain, so there will be no standing water. The water feature is at the South end, close to Front Street, there will be lots of tables and chairs, it will be a very pleasant place to sit and watch the water and the activity. The water feature is not meant to be a kids' splash pad.

The City has expanded the scope of work for the design team and have partnered with Transportation Services, which is always a good thing, and we are working together so that the paving and the kind of design approach in the park is going to wrap around the South-end of the new North Market building. There will be new trees planted in the pavement away from the curbside and closer to the building. The short-term bike rental that is in the park will be moved down to Front Street. Those are some of the key features along Front Street.

If we look at the North end towards King Street there is a beautiful large planter with seating that wraps around it and a big boulder at the end and it kind of picks up on the formal garden right across King Street in St. James Park. It is going to feature indigenous medicinal planting and lots of seating. The Centre area of the park will be kept open, we know this is a very busy kind of pedestrian promenade, it will be a wonderful experience to walk through there, and it

will provide space for spill-out event, such as the historic Farmer's Market, we will still be able to put tents during the warmer season and accommodate other events.

Planned additional features and elements which Nancy called social infrastructure include park features that support everybody. They include a drinking fountain, a very robust outdoor sink designed for people to come out of the market and wash their produce and their hands. There is also a misting station, good for just cooling off on hot days, and a warming station where pedestrians can stand and warm their hands. Those are meant to be features that everyone can use, including more vulnerable community members. Peter Tomlinson posed a question about the Art Installation that has been at the North end of Market Lane for a number of years and is sadly neglected, what will happen to this and how can it be avoided in the future with the new features that will be added? There is also the question of lighting, he feels the new lighting in St. James Park is very warm and attractive, in contrast with the lighting installed earlier in Berczy Park which is cooler. Since this will front directly onto St. James Park he hopes the lighting in Market Lane will complement the lighting in St. James Park rather than taking the cooler lighting approach in Berczy Park.

Nancy responded that the existing Public Art work is going to be removed, it has fallen into disrepair and we certainly have every intention to keep the new water feature in very good repair. The earlier water feature was actually the very first public art installation that the City did and we have learned a lot since then and there were some challenges. We now have stronger codes and accessibility that we integrate into our design. The new water feature will be simpler to maintain.

As for lighting – we have really excellent lighting designers on our team who did the lighting on St. James Cathedral. We are going to have very slender lighting poles, gentle, attractive lighting and overhead lighting in three special places in the middle area, below the level of Market Square Condominium, taken great care that no light will be directed into those residential units. The overhead lights are going to have three different constellations and they are an indigenous perspective on constellations, adding a very lovely feeling to the lighting. The timeline for this work: they are planning to render it in late 2022 or early 2023, but construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2023 with a reopening of the Park in late 2023. Here is the timeline”

## **Project Timeline**

- Winter 2020/2021: Hire a design team.
- Spring 2021 to Early Winter 2022: Community engagement.
- Spring to Fall 2022: Design development and contract documents for tender.
- Late 2022: Hire a construction team.
- Spring 2023: Construction starts.
- Fall 2023: Construction complete, park reopens.

You may check on any updates through these links:

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/venues-facilities-bookings/booking-city-facilities/st-lawrence-market/north-st-lawrence-market-redevelopment/>

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/improvements-expansion-redevelopment/market-lane-park-improvements/>

Mary MacDonald enquired about seating arrangements in the park. Nancy responded that they are working on that detail right now. This design is meant to pull together elements of other public spaces and parks in the neighbourhood. The site furnishing that is in Berczy Park is probably what they will choose, including chairs that are upright or at an angle. There was strong feedback from the audience that upright chairs would be much preferred over angled ones, we are dealing with older community members and angled or lounge chairs are more difficult to handle for older people.

Suzanne continued her presentation.

This Precinct – now District – is considered an asset of the City of Toronto. When we were working with the North Market Working Group Pam O’Connell agreed to strike what is called an Advisory Committee. It’s the St. Lawrence Market Precinct Advisory Committee. The Committee has been up and running since then. It is made up of different groups, there are stakeholders from the area, SLNA has a rep, namely Suzanne Kavanagh, the BIA has a rep, the South Market tenants have a rep and then they have other people on the Committee who are called Subject Matter Experts, and they have to apply through the Clerk’s office to the City. So there are around 18 people with different skill sets. The Committee meets once a month, the minutes are up on the website.

Good news. In 2012 the St. Lawrence Market was listed through National Geographic as the best market in the world, and this year we are listed as being in the top ten. The other good news is that this market, because it is a public market and a city asset, never closed its doors throughout covid, although we reduced them, of course. Just as covid was starting out we were ready to post our new extended hours and sadly, the City pulled back on that. Here are the new hours:

The South market is open Sundays, 10 – 5

Tuesday to Friday, 9 – 7

Saturday, 7 – 5

And the Farmers’ Market tent is open Saturdays from 5 – 3

This is a pilot and we will be tracking all of the available data: sales, traffic counts – every time you walk in it will be counted, and this is driven by some research the City had done in this regard. Over the years thousands of people have moved into the area and research shows that the majority of shoppers are within 10 walking minutes from the area. Extending the hours is great news for the market.

**Market Street** – the BIA will present about Market Street at our November meeting. We started this work back in 2012, wanting to go curb to curb so that there is no cut whatsoever, in order to make it pedestrian-friendly. The Street won two awards in 2013 and 2015, and it was called an example of a great street. We certainly had a hand in making it as pedestrian-friendly as possible. We did a pilot this year for four months of no traffic and will have to go back and look at the data and see what our next steps are.

**St. Lawrence Market Precinct Strategic Plan** – We hired a firm to help us with this and developed the following statement:

To be recognized as a community of cultural, social and commercial places and spaces that inspires, connects and enriches residents and visitors and provides opportunities for merchants, vendors and creators to thrive.

We are putting the final touches on this plan and when it is finished we will send it out to the SLNA as well so people can take a look at it. As we progress we will be checking in with the community once in a while to be sure that we are on track. We interviewed people like David Crombie and SLNA President Stewart Linton to get input as to what direction we should be choosing.

**North Market** – Opening in 2023. When the building is completed the courts will be coming in and they will be doing the retrofitting/buildout from the third story up and so we still have some input with the main level. The City will be sending out a RFP for anybody who is interested in running a café type facility on the first floor, and on the second floor we have a senior resource centre. We have no idea what this looks like, it is going to be in planning mode and it will be on the second floor closer to facing South and West, looking out over the park. It is a work in progress and we are hoping that there are no further delays. The stakeholders – the SLNA, the BIA and the tenants – then select the person who serves on this Committee. For the last few years it just so happened that I was the Chair of this Committee and it has been a most rewarding experience for me. Way back when it was the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association who was able to secure some federal funding to do some research, and then the City joined in to find the architect to build the North Market.

## **The Fur Ball 22 – Kristine Morris**

Friends of St. James Park partnered with the Dogs of St. James Park to host a Halloween Dog Contest and Charity Raffle which we are calling the Fur Ball 22 – to be held on Saturday, October 29 in St. James Park from 3 pm – rain date October 30. So far 24 pups have registered. At the event we will be holding a raffle, and the event has been advertising in the last two SLNA newsletters. Local businesses have donated fabulous prizes! All the proceeds are going to a charitable organization.

## **SLNA – Five Areas of Strategic Focus**

### **Responsible Development**

- Advocate for responsible development in the neighbourhood and its near surroundings
- Development which preserves its unique nature and heritage character, conforms to City policies and is supported by adequate infrastructure
- Development Committee  
Chair: Suzanne Kavanagh

### **Development Committee Members**

- Suzanne Kavanagh, Chair, St. Lawrence on the Park
- Steven Casey, KPMB, The Globe & Mail
- Debra Corey, King's Court
- Stewart Linton, ex-officio, Olde York Place 1
- Robert Sherrin, Abby Lofts
- Peter Tomlinson, The Spire
- Al Smith, Mark Van Elsberg, SLMNBIA

Suzanne emphasizes that the main purpose of the Development Committee is to let the City Planners work with the developers on all the policy matters. The Development Committee is not as concerned about height and street level, the Committee is more concerned with how it looks at the street level when you are walking down the street, i.e. the public realm or the streetscape. The idea is that the Committee works with developers in finding a way to influence or inform them about a particular neighbourhood. We know that we have made a difference. One developer described us as very firm but fair, and another said “we now have a better building after working with the Development Committee than we first started out”. Right now, within the St. Lawrence boundaries there are over 40 applications that are either being proposed or being started or pre-application. It is a lot of activity. Our neighbourhood evolved over time. When David Crombie was the mayor and introduced the notion of mixed



housing that we are very proud of, we have community housing, co-ops, town homes and condominiums.

## **Community Updates**

**Don River – South Cherry Street Bridge** – one of the bridges is now open and traffic is flowing down Cherry along Commissioner West-bound to the new bridge.

**Wellington Street** – the area East of Leader Lane is now complete on the North side, and finally the people who live at 30 Wellington can get out onto Front Street, Leader Lane is likely to open at that intersection shortly, so there is progress being made. We continue to meet every two weeks with the contractor and the City.

**Elevate/Just For Laughs** – there has been some debriefing between the two organizers and various City departments – we were not part of those discussions. A lot of the issues the City departments had were put on the table – Eddy from Councillor’s Moise’s office has documented a number of the issues that residents have forwarded. It is unlikely that much more substantive work will be done before the end of the year, it is just a bit too early for the two organizations to talk about what they may wish to do in 2023. We are going to have a conversation at least with Elevate, there is some indication that they may scale back to some degree. SLNA will continue to be involved.

Congratulations to the new City Councillors, we have invited both of them to come to our November Community meeting and we have requested to begin to orient them to our issues, and hopefully we will meet both Osma Malik and Chris Moise in November.

We are still working on the date for our Membership event in November or December and will be sure to send you the information.

**Next SLNA Community Meeting – November 30 at 7:00 p.m.**

