



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

**Held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform**

SLNA President Stewart Linton welcomed 62 community members and delegates to the April 2022 SLNA Community Meeting.

### **Calvin Mitchell – Elevate**

Calvin talked about the Elevate Festival which will be held in this neighbourhood during the week of September 20<sup>th</sup>, jointly with Just For Laughs, represented tonight by Oz Weaver. Elevate is a Toronto-based not for profit organization and its mission is to invite world-class innovators to solve society's greatest challenges. The goal is to bring together the tech community across Canada to showcase how this community can do good for the world. The Elevate Festival started in 2017 at Meridian Hall as well as other Toronto locations and its goal is to Educate, Innovate and to Celebrate. This will be a three-day festival which will take place from September 20 – 22, 2022, taking place primarily at Meridian Hall and the St. Lawrence theatres next door and the area of Bay and King. A new element that will be added this year is the Arts. In the evening there will be an outdoors street festival, a publicly accessible free activity. They are expecting 30,000 attendees to participate, as well as 350 speakers. Mayor John Tory, Venus Williams and Chris Hadfield are some of the anticipated speakers. They will also be introducing a Block Party, a live outdoor concert series taking place in the evenings will held in the area between Front and Church, with a vehicular close-down, as well as in Berczy Park. There will be a variety of activities as well as restaurant experiences through food trucks. They also feature a Social Impact Statement on Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, as well as a fully green footprint.

## **Oz Weaver – Just For Laughs**

Oz Weaver is the Festival Producer of Just For Laughs Toronto. Founded in 1983, the Just For Laughs Group is a global leader in the comedy industry and a powerhouse in the creation of multi-platform comedy content. Beginning with the Montreal Comedy Festival, Just For Laughs has expanded to include festivals and event locations in Toronto, Vancouver, Austin (USA), Sydney (Australia) and London (UK).

Established in 2012, Just For Laughs Toronto (formerly JFL42) is already one of the largest comedy festivals in the world and they will be bringing comedy out into the streets with free and accessible programming in the heart of Toronto and becoming the largest English comedy festival in the world. This means creating new opportunities to feature Toronto's diverse and emerging comedic talent from the city's core to North York, and from Scarborough to Etobicoke. JFL Toronto has grown to achieve a local economic impact of \$3.8 million in 2019 and employ the equivalent of 25 full-time jobs. The 2019 edition included 150 artists and 80+ shows spread over 12 venues. 83,789 patrons entered the Toronto shows and events, made up of 16.4% tourists and 68% of those visitors visited Toronto primarily to attend the festival. An estimated \$2.4 million was spent, generating \$1 million in fiscal revenues across all three levels of government and 18,355 nights of commercial accommodation.

They are looking to create a hub in our St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood and will be returning to the city with a significant expansion, namely a 10 day festival consisting of 250+ live indoor and outdoor shows, establishing a 4-day comedy event featuring:

- The Headliners – 12 Headliners will be booked at Scotiabank Arena and Meridian Hall. Biggest names in comedy already booked are Trevor Noah, John Mulaney and Amy Schumer.
- The 42 – the heart of the Festival is “The 42” with shows of 15+ venues and clubs around the city where fans can discover new and up-and-coming talent, consisting of 150+ shows.
- Comedycon – 30 days of the biggest comedy fan convention in the world with 50+ live events and unique brand integrations.
- JFL Toronto Street Festival – a brand-new 3-day street festival taking place in the heart of downtown Toronto, in front of Meridian Hall and including Berczy Park – September 23 – 25.

Mary McDonald raised the question of traffic control and asked if 51 Division will be involved. Oz responded that indeed 51 Division will be involved to a degree, but there will also be private security teams and of course the City Transportation Division. Currently there is work on a Traffic Management survey with the City and IBI, planning out the entire area right down to the Gardiner. Stewart Linton cautioned that at this point no permits have been issued and this is a work in progress which will hopefully be supported by the neighbourhood and the BIA. Oz commented that neither festival has announced their firm street plans yet, but work on this has been in progress for over a year. Since they are still in the planning stages it has not been announced publicly.

### **Kristine Morris – Update on Friends of St. James Park**

The flowers are starting to bloom in the park – last fall over 6,000 tulip bulbs were planted by park staff in the formal garden, a great improvement over prior years, and in the entire park 10,000 bulbs were planted altogether. The Garden Club, under the leadership of Margaret Cunningham, showed excellent results, there is a very good group of gardeners in place. The way the upkeep was handled last year was through meeting up in the Park on three different days in the week, and that process will be starting up soon, probably next week. If you are interested in volunteering for the Gardening Club, please use the following email:

[FSJPToronto@gmail.com](mailto:FSJPToronto@gmail.com)

The BIA is planning to bring back the music in Old Town Toronto in the Pavillion, no information on specific bands as yet, but the date has been determined – the evening of June 23 from 7 – 9. The Friends of St. James Park is working jointly with the BIA on bringing active classes to the Park, there will be three different classes of three weeks each, such as Yoga, Pilates, or a Dance Class, starting in July.

### **Mary McDonald – Update on Friends of Berczy Park**

Mary started with some history on the Friends of Berczy Park group – In 2011 the City's Park and Forestry Division hosted a public meeting at the Community Centre to discuss Parkland in Toronto. On the way home that night seven members formed the Friends of Berczy Park group. In November of that year Christopher Hume, columnist at The Toronto Star, wrote an article "Towers and the Space in between", still in print. He recognized we were advocating for a safe place for families, singles, seniors and tourists to visit our small neighbourhood park. Councillor Pam McConnell invited the group to participate alongside the SLNA and the BIA in working towards that goal. The architect neighbour in the group created a bird's eye view of Berczy Park showing that in 2018 we would have approx. 4,000 residential units in a 1 block radius around the park, including the newly completed 88 Scott, the Berczy Condos, the L-Tower and the Backstage Towers. When she didn't understand that there could possibly be that many

dogs spilling out of the suites the group ran a survey, gave it to 230 dog owners walking past Berczy Park, and at the next meeting landscape architect Claude Cornier from Montreal was present, saw the survey results, and said he had been looking for a whimsical theme for the Berczy Park Fountain. Hence the delightful dog theme for the fountain. Please tell your visiting friends and relatives that there are 28 dogs, looking up at a golden dog bone and a cat sitting on the rim looking off into the distance at two yellow bird statues on a nearby lamp post.

What the group needs now is more volunteers! Please email us at [berczypark@gmail.com](mailto:berczypark@gmail.com) if you wish to join. Last Sunday we had a clean-up and had 10 people showing up. We would like to clean more often than the City decrees that we should. This involves different teams cleaning on different days during the summer – and we pass the bag of cleaning materials to the next team to clean the tables. There are 8 tables, 33 chairs and we have access to a toolbox which allows us to clean up rubbish such as cigarette butts, and use the cleaning supplies. As you walk by that fountain, if you see leaves clogging up the drains, just pull them out, clogged drains turn the water green and when the fountain is running freely every 20 minutes there is fresh water for our dogs.

You may have noticed that the upper tier of dogs on the fountain are wearing beautiful Ukrainian scarves. About 4 years ago we approached senior knitters at Old York to knit winter scarves for our dogs, with permission of the BIA and the City, and this has been a resounding success. One of the knitters recently suggested knitting Ukrainian scarves which are knitted with indoor/outdoor material. We are currently asking the BIA and the City for permission to have the dogs wear the scarves while the fountain is running.

Stewart Linton mentioned the unusual situation of the SLNA being split into two wards, with both city councillors resigning at about the same time, and we are looking to Tom Davidson to tell us more about the future.

### **Tom Davidson – Update, Impact on Neighbourhood Projects**

The most important piece of news in that context is that as of April 28<sup>th</sup> the yearly delivery of compost will be put into David Crombie Park to allow everyone in the neighbourhood to start their yearly gardening efforts.

Originally Joe had announced that he was not running for re-election and then informed us that he had taken a position with George Brown College and was resigning his seat as of the end of April. So what we see now is that up to the next Council Meeting on May 12 the office will continue to function. There will be transitioning of files, new email addresses and the appointment of an interim Councillor until the next election for Ward 20 will be taking place at

the next Council Meeting. Joe has been working with the Mayor's Office and his council colleagues to help organize the process until the appointed person arrives.

Our colleagues in Councillor Wong-Tam's office are going through a similar process.

As for park projects – the David Crombie Revitalization, a massive project, is working its way through the various phases of implementation. The next stages are the tender for the detailed design work for the next phases of the project, including the park portion and the city street right of ways sections which will all be done under one contract. The tender is out and will be awarded during the next few weeks. The detailed design work for the park based on the master plan concept takes a number of months, until early next year, and the procurement for the construction will go out after the design drawings are formalized, which means the time for construction will be closer to 2023/24. A formal update from park staff and another public meeting will be held later in 2022 when the designers have more of their design work under their belt.

We are also following the implementation of the Esplanade and Mill Street bike lanes. Coming up in June will be a wholesale review, taking stock of the implementation up to this point and adjustments that need to take place. There will be another round of public feedback, and the data that is being collected on use and traffic patterns will be presented in June, and the SLNA will be part of that. This will lead to a review of the expansion to the West. The implementation to the West side is not going to be rolled out immediately.

Further to the East we had our Ontario Line and Transit Oriented Communities which came to a report to Executive, and the city planning staff had to work with the planning that had been imposed on them by Infrastructure Ontario and the Province. The SLNA was part of a working group charged with pushing as far as possible the goals, objectives and principles of the master plan implementation into that work. As well, we had been working on the interpretation of the long-awaited District Library for the area. The timeline of the originally suggested location, the First Parliament site, was very uncertain, possibly out by 15 years, and subject to delays. So they looked at the alternatives in the neighbourhood and a proposal to use the space South of the South Market, currently the temporary North market site, which was then brought forward as a suggested new location for the library. This is a change that has been brought about because of the hand we have been dealt by the Province. We know that a District Library is a very important community facility that the neighbourhood needs. This significant project is going to bring not just the library itself but at 30,000 sq.ft. will serve as a community hub that can provide space for community events, programming and educational activities. It will be a 3-storey building, not a highrise.

The library will be commissioning architects and designers to then start working with the community through public consultation on what the library space will look like, but most importantly how do we maximize and use it as a public amenity space that incorporates green space both around the building and on top of the building.

The owner of 45 The Esplanade, the current Novotel site, commissioned planners and designers for a proposal. A preliminary report went to Community Council which will lead to a public meeting, but we can say that at this point that the proposal of building two towers on a site that is difficult to develop will likely not be acceptable to planning staff at this point in time. We had an update from the shelter housing and support staff last month which started to identify the transition period for post-pandemic action. That period laid out how to responsibly move and reincorporate the base shelter system at the same time as incorporating new housing opportunities for individuals currently occupying shelter hotels. The base shelter system and the shelter hotel arrangements represent a 50/50 split at this point. This is definitely the right time to start this process, identifying the process on how to return to the base shelter system and decommission 45 The Esplanade. There is a timeline in place until the end of the year, but it could potentially take until next April, it is an ongoing dynamic process.

There is a significant amount of ongoing work with Waterfront Toronto, most recently the Quay Site development partner has been announced. There is the revitalization of Parliament Slip as a destination area for incorporating boating uses as well as pools and restaurants. There is also a host of huge capital projects, notably the Gardiner re-figuration and the rebuilding of Lakeshore Boulevard. There is a massive amount of traffic modelling taking place at this point, with an update due in June. The staff are using a new tool, GIS mapping.

## **Stewart Linton – Community Updates**

### **Donna Patterson – St. Lawrence Reduces**

This program is part of the SLNA Waste Reduction Group, and originally slated to be introduced in 2019/2020, but of course covid stopped us in our tracks, but now there are local Reduces groups all over the city. The aim of the program is to reduce single use and take-away waste. We are asking our local businesses to allow us to use our own containers when we make purchases. The benefits for customers are that they are reducing single use garbage and helping the environment. Also, some business give a discount when we bring our own reusables (mugs and containers). The program is free for businesses and there are many benefits for them as well. They will save money on packaging costs and they will also be doing their part to become more sustainable and reduce single use waste in Toronto.

When the businesses sign up to the program we give them a green sticker which features “BYO”, and at the bottom “St. Lawrence Reduces Waste”. All the local groups are using the same stickers, which are based on the original Roncesville one, “Roncy Reduces”. It is a really good brand, people recognize it and the program has been around for approx. 3 years. When businesses sign up we give them the green sticker to put in their windows to show customer that they are part of the program and accept our reusables. We will also promote the business on our facebook and Instagram. The program is totally free, supported by the City of Toronto, Live Green Toronto, The Neighbourhood Climate Action Champion Program, the Waste Reduction Group, the SLNA and the BIA. A huge thanks to Steven at the BIA who has supported this program since 2019 when we first started talking about it, he has been a champion of this program, and we can’t thank him enough for all of his help and his support.

Currently the members of the Waste Reduction Group and St. Lawrence Reduces are canvassing local businesses. We are starting with coffee shops right now because single use coffee cups can’t be recycled and have to go into the garbage and they are a huge part of the garbage waste around the world. Estimates are that 1 ½ billion of disposable coffee cups every year go into the garbage every in Canada.

So far we have signed up Black Canary, Balzacs, XO Bisous, Starbucks, Fahrenheit Coffee and Aroma, and we also know that many local business are already accepting reusables. It will take us a while to get around to all of the businesses, so we are asking that you take your reusable container with you wherever you go – including coffee shops and restaurants - and ask if you can use it, including in the Market. Once we have more businesses signed up we are planning a contest and will let you know the details. Please support St. Lawrence Reduces.

In response to a question from the audience Donna mentioned that we don’t have a reusable container program, so we can bring our own container, any container of our choice. If you have ever been to Sukho THAI, they use a container program called Supply and if you order take-out they will supply you with that. Supply is just one of many reusable container programs in the city, there is also one in the West end called Inwit, and there is also a program called Dream Zero where someone having an event can rent dishes and cups in order to avoid throwing out paper plates, etc.

### **Stewart Linton – Update on Wellington Street**

The process this year is significantly different from last year in that there is a community Stakeholder group, including a number of people who are at this meeting, there is a bi-weekly meeting of us with all of the relevant city staff and they are giving us scheduling and work progress updates on an ongoing basis. The bulk of the work at the moment at the moment is removing the North asphalt skating rink from Wellington Street between Church and Yonge, and then some electrical work on both Front and near the corner of Front and Market Street.

There was a comment in the notes about some emergency work at the Flatiron building regarding unsafe building bricks, but Stewart could not confirm any action after a walk around the area.

### **Update on Market Street**

There was a city recommendation regarding closing of the street to traffic from June to September this year prompted by some of us in the Stakeholder group, and it went before Toronto East York Community Council last week. Both the SLNA and the BIA deputed in favour of it, feeling strongly that we needed a longer trial than the two weekends we got last year in order to prove proof of concept. And that proof of concept is that a pedestrianized street will lead to a better experience in the neighbourhood and lead to more business for the vendors in the area, not less. It was clear that the vendors are not uniformly in favour of this, with a number of deputations against it, but it is not our expectation that this will result in loss of business. If it does happen this may have to be rethought to be sure it remains a healthy business environment. It carried unanimously at Council, the hard work now begins in working out the details.

### **Update on First Parliament Site**

- the South site demolition is completed
- approx. 10 weeks for North site demolition (Porsche, Staples)
- archaeological investigations on the South site resume as early as April 27
- scheduled Stage 4 excavations (may imply that items of greater interest have been found) and Stage 2 Trenching
  - both North and South sites
  - expected to take the remainder of 2022 to complete
- indigenous monitors will be on site
- Hoarding ([OntarioLine@metrolinx.com](mailto:OntarioLine@metrolinx.com)) There is a lot of plywood lying around – we have been told that the permanent hoarding is not likely to go up for a year so you may wish to express your feelings about that to Ontario Line, email above.

### **Transit-Oriented Communities Development (TOC)**

This came before City Council on April 6, following its consideration by the Executive Committee on March 30. The motion had 21 paragraphs, there was an amendment proposed by Joe Cressy which had 3 additional paragraphs, and another amendment proposed by Kristyn Wong-Tam which had 8 additional paragraphs, and all of those were carried by Council.

Of significance, already mentioned by Tom, is the fact that a couple of them talk about continuing work to ensure that the First Parliament Masterplan – to the extent that it can still be implemented given the current constraints - is actually implemented. There was direction to staff to develop a joint strategy to determine how best to implement how much of the masterplan. One of those paragraphs included using the funds from the sale – which we had been advocating since the beginning – to permit and facilitate that, which may include acquisition of additional space on the ground floor. There was also a request for stakeholder and community consultation. A further request was to explore acquiring additional parkland in the area. Kristyn's motions included acquiring more ground floor space at the First Parliament south site. Staff will be working on all of those motions.

### **Jamii – New Production**

Coming in May: **Divine Interventions**, co-presented with CORPUS

David Crombie Park at Princess

- May 24 – May 27 at 6 p.m.
- May 28 at 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Developed in confinement, a playful response to the challenges of 2020 and beyond.

Five goddesses descend from the heavens and tour the neighbourhood on a giant quint tandem bicycle.

Featuring a diverse cast of powerhouse female performers.

Free!

### **Other Updates**

Smashing Windows

51 Division received more than 30 emails about this issue. Work is starting on a quick remedy.

The SLNA is planning an event in St. James Park on July 1 from noon – 4 p.m. – Save the Date!

### **Possible Future Topics**

- Increased Police Presence
- How can businesses better protect themselves
- Filming Notifications
- King Street Transit Priority
- Pollinator Gardens
- Construction impacting transit
- Discussion of shelter at 45 The Esplanade

**The next Community Meeting will be held May 25, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

