



St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association Community Meeting

Held on Wednesday, September 28, 2022 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform

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

Dave Smith, our Neighbourhood Waterfront Officer from 51 Division, gave a brief update. Reports from 51 Division is a new initiative which will be added to all of our Community Meetings in future. Dave has been doing this kind of work for over a year now, and he certainly invites interaction if you see him on the street – this is one of the ways he can be of assistance to community members. The Novotel hotel issue has been a very challenging one, and he reports that the Novotel will be closing at the end of December (the date could change) which will alleviate some of the problems the neighbourhood has encountered. He reminded us that it is important to remember that the individuals housed at the hotel deal with a number of addiction issues as well as mental health problems, and Homes First do their best to support them. There are of course other problems in the neighbourhood as well but the 6-day Elevate and Just For Laughs Festival was not one of them for the policy officers, Dave reported that he did not encounter any policing problems.

There was a question from the audience as to how to deal with individuals loitering in their lobby in buildings that don't have a designated concierge or superintendent to assist with this problem. Dave explained that if you call the police they are obligated to attend. He suggests that the caller should ask to be contacted by an officer with the results of their investigation. Dave mentioned that we live in the busiest Division not only in Toronto but in the country.

There was also mention of a Community Services Team through Homes First, and Dave cautioned that the Homes First team may come out to investigate but will not pursue the issue if the individual loitering in the lobby is not one of the residents of 45 The Esplanade. They might be helpful with de-escalation; however. The phone number is Homes First CST – 647-333-0478.

In response to a question, the paid duty officers at 45 The Esplanade cover the areas of Front Street to the North; Jarvis to the East; the alleyway behind 45 The Esplanade, and Yonge Street to the West.

The non-emergency police phone number is 416-808-2222. 911 is the number to call if there is direct danger to a person or property. Any minor reports, such as a stolen bike or a broken window, should be reported online at torontopolice@on.ca Everything will be investigated.

Ken Dion – Waterfront Toronto – Don River Mouth Revitalization – Port Lands Flood Protection

This is moving the river into an additional channel that is being created out of the Port Lands. Ken is the Project Director for Port Land's integration with Waterfront Toronto and has been in that role for the last four years. His role is to work with the various teams that are leading the design and the implementation of the Port Lands to be sure they are collaborating in an integrated fashion and to assure their design components are jiving with each other and conforming with the overall environmental assessment. He plays a significant role in coordination with all of the other Capital projects that are underway with Metrolinx in the City and the Cadillac Fairview Team and others in trying to find efficiencies between the agencies that are doing a lot of work on the Toronto Waterfront.

The Flood Protection project is an effort for the Port Lands area to provide flood protection for the broader Port Lands area which covers an area of about 290 hectares which is vulnerable to flooding in case of a Hurricane Hazel flood event. It is not just flood protection, it is an effort to bring back a more naturalized river mouth system while integrating with all the redevelopment and the intensification that is required here in downtown Toronto in anticipation of significant increases in population over the next 50 years.

New Parks, River Valley, Roads and Bridges – under the existing conditions the Don River flows Southward underneath the Lake Shore Boulevard Bridge and does a hard right into the Keating Channel before going into the inner harbour. What we are currently constructing is a multi-outlet river valley system that will create a normalized base flow river channel with shallow water conditions and a meandering river system bounded by natural-like levies and bounded by offline wetlands that are behind the levies but fed by Lake Ontario water level conditions. This

includes a significant network of public trails of different types and a network of parks higher up on the valley walls and above the valley that bounds the river valley system itself.

A new naturalized river will flow into the Polson Slip before it turns into the inner harbour to the West. The Keating Channel is retained but it is modified to provide a nice public promenade in the future to create a more formalized water's edge environment for the people that will be visiting and recreating in the future. It will also provide a major conduit for very large flood events. There is a third outlet that goes straight South of the Keating Channel, South of Commissioners Street and then flows into what's called the Ship Channel which is a much larger channel than the Keating Channel which is about twice as wide and equally as deep. This outlet only gets engaged during very large flood events around the 25 - 50 year flood event which means you have a 2% to 4% chance that it will occur in any given year where flood waters will overtop a fairly large levy on the South side of the river and then begin to flow through the largest wetland in the whole design before it enters the Ship Channel. We have these three outlets so that we can disperse flood waters into different pathways so that we are not putting all of the erosivity of a very large flood event into a naturalized habitat which is highly erosive.

Here is what happens in the event of a non-flood event in this third outlet – this is actually not connected to the Don River at all, it is a large wetland fed by cleaner Lake Ontario water that comes in through the Ship Channel itself and provides the highest quality fisheries and wildlife habitat in the entire design. People will not be permitted into the wetland itself, there will be a perimeter pedestrian trail system that will allow people to look into the wetland, but is largely reserved for fisheries and amphibians, birds and other wildlife to occupy and utilize that space. These three outlets have extremely different ecological and public experiences to create different flavours and opportunities, not only from a recreational and societal perspective but also from a function perspective in regards to hydraulics and public safety considerations.

With this river system we are creating two large islands as well. We have to be able to service the islands that will be developed and we have brought in bridges that will connect to these islands. We have five different segments that were constructed in Halifax, constructed in Nova Scotia and brought up the seaway by barge, and unloaded and installed into place on the foundations that were preconstructed for them and ready to go. We have two segments of bridge, creating the Commissioner Street connection that will go over the main river channel, as well as the single largest bridge, the Cherry Street South bridge that came in on the Polson Slip area and then we have two separate bridges, the two shortest ones, the first bridge destined for a future LRT over the Keating Channel and the last bridge we received this summer is the road bridge that will also span the Keating Channel.

We have significant work underway, major work on the Lakeshore Bridge, not being built in Halifax, we are building it in place. Last year we took down the Gardiner above it and all the

way out to Logan, that was work that will be undertaken between 2025 and 2030 as part of the Gardiner project; however, there were big challenges to be able to provide flood protection. We had to widen and deepen the river North of Lake Shore to be able to get the water levels low enough to be able to get underneath to provide flood protection. In order to make that work we had to raise the bridge, lengthen the bridge, and we had to deepen the area under the bridge. We spent some time trying to figure out how to do all that bridge work when you have an active highway, the Gardiner, above the Lake Shore area at the same time. We came to the conclusion that it was too dangerous for the public and the construction workers to try to operate under those conditions. We worked with the City a couple of years ago to preauthorize that part of the work required be part of our work so that we can make the head space room and build the bridge without any risk to the public. Over a period of five weekends last September a demolition company was contracted and came in and removed a kilometer section of the Gardiner so we would have the space to be able to do the work.

Currently we have taken out of commission the three lanes that went Eastbound on the South side of the bridge and all of the traffic is on the Westbound lanes on the North side as we build the new abutments and the new bridge decking. That work should be done in early 2023, and at that point we will flip all of the traffic onto the new bridge.

We wanted to preinstall a lot of the servicing that's going onto the islands, and that has taken place. We have three parks as part of this project, there is Promontory Park South which is a very large event space park, a regional park. Then there is River Park North and River Park South. River Park North will have more formalized park space, in contrast with the River Park South area which is more of a trail network.

Ken showed several videos of the work in progress, the amount of work that is planned to be finalized by December 2024 is absolutely staggering. There were several comments about the beautiful bridges we will be able to enjoy, and there are of course plans for bike paths and separate pedestrian areas.

Ingrid Buday – Noise Considerations in the Urban Environment

Ingrid Buday was introduced as the leading advocate for urban noise reduction. She has created a website called Too Much Noise and she will walk us through some of the information to help us understand what we can do to ensure that the noise bylaws that will be finalized in the Spring actually do what they are intended to do and reduce noise in our city – something we are all too familiar with.

Ingrid told us that her background is in HR and IT and she started to develop a data set that she wanted to use to advocate for noise reduction. In July 2021 she bought her sound meter,

taking noise measurements from her balcony. Air and noise pollution are number 1 and 2 for urban environmental health hazards. It is time to understand, act and advocate for better quality of life, health and sleep for everyone through city policy.

Sound is a layer that hovers over a city, travels far in all directions and affects our well-being. Unwanted sounds are called noise. Noise is a city-wide problem.

Key findings from the 2017 Toronto Public Health Report:

60% of noise variability is explained by road traffic

- This is preventable

93% of the population is above the nighttime noise guideline (45 dBA)

- This causes significant health issues

Significant differences by socioeconomic status

- This is city planning, zoning and influence

Negative health effects start at 55 db. Effects can include cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance and mental health impacts. For those next to arterials or highways the decibels are always above 55 db.

Ingrid prepared a table of night readings from her place (21 floor, NW exposure) and, for comparison, Arthur and Donna's place (13th floor, NW exposure). The World Health Organization says that we should have an average of 45 db at night to not suffer from a variety of health issues caused by sleep disturbance. Not surprisingly, the numbers recorded were unacceptably high at all hours of the night.

Here is a timeline on City Noise Bylaws:

2017 – City commissions Dr. Tor Oiamo to conduct a study for Toronto Public Health in preparation for the review.

2019 – Noise Bylaws under review

Spring 2020 – put on hold due to covid

Spring 2022 – Review restarted. City asks public for feedback, they receive over 900 emails.

July 6, 2022 – City recommendations on “Outstanding Noise Directives” are discussed and deputations are heard by the Economic and Community Development Committee

July 22, 2022 – all City and Council Motions are approved by City Council

Spring 2023 – Noise Bylaws will be finalized.

Here are some of the recommendations:

Asking for additional support from the Toronto Police to conduct more joint blitzes with Bylaws to address excessive vehicle noise and illegally modified vehicles.

Looking to equip Toronto Police with sound level meters to support enforcement of excessive vehicle noise.

Introduce sound level limit for vehicles when their engines are idle.

Initiate an automated enforcement pilot program (e.g. noise-activated cameras) as a potential tool to curbing noise pollution in Toronto.

In addition to the City's recommendations some City Councillors recommended their own and they were also passed.

Ingrid's recommendations for Next Steps are to reach out to candidates who have Noise on their platform, find out how the City plans to carry out the recommendations, and pull interested parties together on one Facebook group: Too Much Noise TO, and on Twitter @sippindata. This would allow us to come together and organize, email Councillors, perhaps have some fun events, etc. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/504125341099772>
NoiseCapture

An audience member mentioned that TTC Diesel Buses are inordinately noisy and efforts should be made to reduce this.

Community Updates

REmarket #5 – Nancy Fung reported on a highly successful Remarket event. We received approx. 300 donations which resulted in 28 skids of goods to the Salvation Army and 6 skids of electronics. During the first day we held a Free Market, a lot of people were able to pick up needed items for re-use. On the second day we had Repair Day with the Repair Café – 17 volunteers carried out 41 repairs. Also, the always successful Culture Link Bike Hub with 3 fixers and 10 bikes. Nancy reports that the plan is to offer REmarket three times a year and the next dates are January 25 and 26 2023. The group thanks the volunteers and the SLNA community for their participation and their support.

Waste Reduction Group – Nancy added that both the Remarket and Waste Reduction Group are looking for volunteers – it is a one or two hour commitment. Contact us at reduce@slna.ca

St. Lawrence Reduces – Donna Patterson. St. Lawrence Reduces is a group of local businesses that allow customers to bring in their own cups and containers. The reason we are asking businesses to do this is because we are trying to reduce single use waste and garbage. In case you don't know this – a coffee cup cannot be recycled. We have 36 local business that have signed up, 23 of them are in the market. We had a contest in the summer where we asked people to take a picture of themselves in one of the participating businesses with their reusable cup or container, and we had two winners a week for six weeks, and about a third of the people were local and the other two thirds were from outside the area. We had two winners from the islands who come to the market to do their shopping and some winners from the Distillery District, from Liberty Village and one winner from Markham.

Please bring your reusable cup and containers every time you go shopping and be aware that just because a vendor may not have one of our stickers does not mean that they don't support our program. We are all volunteers and have been able to approach businesses since the spring, but we have not been able to contact all of them as yet. With our 36 businesses that have signed up we are the most successful Reduces group in Toronto and we are the busiest one in Toronto. If you go to Canada Reduces website you can see all of the local Reduces groups.

Membership Evet – November 21, 7 – 9 pm. President Linton announced that the Board has approved a live membership event for the fall with a tentative date of November 21. It will be held at a local restaurant, with appetizers provided (and a cash bar) and we are hoping to have our delegates invite people who are not members, buildings who are not members as yet – the more we represent the neighbourhood the more influence we have to make a difference for our community. It will be a fun evening – imagine, no zoom!

Elevate/Just for Laughs Events – We certainly acknowledge all of the input you have provided to the organizers, the Councillors and the Councillors' Office, and those who copied the SLNA. We have already reached out to both organizations and both have agreed to a debrief, so many of the issues will be addressed in the next few weeks and we will take it from there. It was acknowledged that there was disruption and this will be an opportunity to improve if there is an interest in having this continue in subsequent years. We will most certainly keep you up-to date. You are more than welcome to send your comments to www.slina.ca and we will make sure that your concerns are recorded and passed along.

Committees – we now have a full complement for the Finance Committee and will meet in the fall, but we are still looking for a representative for the Police Liaison Committee. That meeting is the second Wednesday of every month and we would like to have a delegate to take on this responsibility. A quick update on the Parliament site – we have met with city representatives, the Transit Expansion Office, the Real Estate people, the Councillors' office and the Economic Development Group. Our recommendations, which was received by the City with some

enthusiasm, is that the City take a much bigger role in the ground floor of the First Parliament site, the Southern site, occupy all of the non-condo/commercial space on the ground floor, make it more of a robust cultural corridor experience that might extend from say, the Hockey Hall of Fame out to and including the Distillery District, perhaps as far East as Corktown Common and the River and make it sufficiently robust that there is a reason for people to go there, stay there, and spend some money there.

The Board has had a number of discussions about forming a new Committee – at the moment we are calling it a Community Relationship Committee. We thought it was time to explain the thought process to you and ask for participation in the next steps. The idea is to create a group that would focus on issues which affect the quality of life in this neighbourhood. So these would be typically, but not necessarily, longer term issues, and the question would be can SLNA make a meaningful difference to what is already happening. The intent is not, as an example, to replace the work that Homes First is doing around 45 The Esplanade which is engaging the community in a number of different ways. The question is, can we do something above and beyond that. Can we engage other voices? We have had communication with the BIA who are interested in participating, and we have had communication with 51 Division – they are interested but not quite clear on how they can participate, so we need to be sure on how we leverage our ability to communicate to make a meaningful difference. The benefit would be that we would use our ability to provide regular feedback to the community. Looking to the future, the committee could perhaps function the same way our Development Committee functions in getting requests from developers to present in advance of submitting their development proposal to the City in order to get expert advice. Or, for example, the Just For Laughs group coming to us for advice ahead of time, and perhaps avoiding a negative community reaction. If you are interested in a conversation that might lead to the formation of such a committee, please let us know.

Next SLNA Community Meeting – October 26 at 7:00 p.m.