



ST. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association Community Meeting

Held on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 from 7 – 9:30 p.m.

Hosted on the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform

Welcome - Stewart Linton, President

Stewart welcomed everyone to the February Community meeting. Next month is the SLNA's AGM with one board position open, for a three year term, and interested community members are encouraged to run for that position. You must be a delegate from a membership building to be eligible to do so. The nomination forms are available on the website and should be emailed to treasurer@slna.ca You can nominate yourself.

Member buildings must be paid up in order for their delegates to vote on items that come before the AGM.

There is a public consultation on February 25 on the improvements proposed for Esplanade/Mill. There was a flyer in the mail giving details and the information is also available on the Esplanade/Mill webpage on the city website.

Keynote Presentation – Rosemary Sadlier

Sharon McMillan introduced our keynote speaker Rosemary Sadlier. In February we celebrate Black History month and in honour of this recognition of our diversity the SLNA has invited Rosemary Sadlier, Order of Ontario Recipient and former President of the Ontario Black History Society. Rosemary also advocated for Black History Month to be recognized across Canada.

As an educator, Rosemary has developed and contributed to African Canadian curriculum and has written seven books on African Canadian history.

Rosemary's presentation contained a brief overview of the history of Black Canadians in Canada and their contributions to various initiatives and communities, including the St. Lawrence and Corktown communities.

St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA – Al Smith, Executive Director and George Milbrandt, Board Chair

Stewart introduced the presentation by the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA, indicating that both the BIA and SLNA work for the community, with the BIA covering business and business owners and the SLNA with responsibility for residents and residential buildings.

Al Smith explained that the BIA – Business Improvement Association – founded in 1984, is a non-profit entity consisting of all businesses and commercial properties in the area, aiming to stimulate local businesses and infrastructure. Members vote on an annual budget that is funded by a levy that is added to all commercial property taxes.

Some highlights from the presentation:

The BIA has expanded twice and now almost matches the size of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association.

They seek to go beyond commercial concerns and want to help the neighbourhood overall. Al pointed out their identified “pillars of strength”:

1. Food and Cuisine
2. History and Heritage
3. Arts and Culture
4. Design

One area of focus for the BIA is The Public Realm which they are seeking to improve, and they are hoping to become a stakeholder in City projects. They also seek to make connections with other BIAs in various areas and work with them jointly on projects.

Shelter at 45 The Esplanade

Stewart reported that a public meeting was held about the newly established Shelter at 45 The Esplanade (The Novotel) with 400 people attending. The meeting generated nearly 200 questions which will all be answered. The Community Liaison Committee will be up and running shortly, and it is intended to be the vehicle to collect and organize the input from the community. There will be many stakeholders, including the police services, major faith communities, the SLNA, also the BIA, as well as many of the buildings in the area. The focus at the beginning will be on community safety and a robust communication program. There will be an ongoing communications bulletin, the first one was just published, containing a high level synopsis of the public community meeting, an introduction of the Homes First staff, and the commitment to answer any outstanding questions from that meeting in the next issue.

Homes First provided further information – the opening was postponed for a few days regarding fire and safety regulations and was now to take place on February 26. They will be accepting donations – warm winter clothing including footwear, PPE items and books. There will be “staggered” intake, a few people one day, a larger number the next, until all 205 rooms will be filled. A 24/7 community safety team phone number will be circulated.

Suzanne Kavanagh – Foundry Update

Suzanne expressed the hope that our voice is being heard given that it now appears that the First Parliament site will no longer be expropriated. Suzanne thanked everyone for their efforts in this regard.

With respect to the Foundry, SLNA’s injunction was successful and the the court agreed on January 29th to pause the demolition work while discussions, etc. continue. 23,000 people signed the SLNA/Friends of the Foundry petition, making it abundantly clear clear that the community objects to the Province’s lack of public consultation on the matter.

On February 12, the Province launched a website that called for public submissions via email to inform the government on their thoughts regarding the Foundry and the use of that site. On Sunday, February 14 the Friends of the Foundry Walking Club hosted a “love-in” – which resulted in a fair bit of expected media coverage. 1,500 letters have been sent to the Province objecting to their actions.

The court hearing for February 26th has been adjourned. SLNA lawyers, City of Toronto lawyers and the Province are in negotiations. The SLNA has been informed that the Province would like to discuss a settlement. We continue to stress that heritage and affordable housing are not mutually exclusive and in fact go hand-in-hand in the most complementary fashion.

At this point we have raised \$30,000 towards legal fees. Tax Receipts can be provided to those who donate funds.

Lakeshore Blvd. Public Realm Update – Tom Davidson

This is a project from the pre-COVID period which has continued to this point – the Gardiner Public Realm plan which came out of the debate on whether to reconfigure, remove, demolish or maintain the Gardiner Expressway. It unfortunately resulted in a hybrid solution which maintained it with modifications that improved it somewhat but did not implement the full boulevard treatment which would have removed the structure. But it at least resulted in increased funding and an opportunity for a public realm plan underneath the Gardiner, to be based more on the thinking and initiatives in other areas that utilize unfriendly infrastructure in the best possible way and continue to break down barriers.

The Project team conducted an analysis of both sides of Lakeshore Blvd., North and South. There is the opportunity of expanding sidewalk and public realm space through narrowing the roads. That framework was applied to each of the zones from Lower Jarvis from Cherry Street and beyond. There will be better run-off conditions and storm water management from the Expressway above. North is an opportunity for a complete new walkway and cycling infrastructure that connects East to West around the rail corridor.

The main emphasis is on breaking down the barriers between North and South and creating new connections between the existing St. Lawrence neighbourhood and the new waterfront areas; all the intersections between Lower Jarvis to Cherry Street are included. Good usage of lighting and possible public art is suggested.

East of the Don River provides an opportunity for an entirely new boulevard to be created. Some areas require waiting for the completion of some of the Metrolinx projects. The first piece of major work East of the Don River will involve the removal of the on- and off-ramp on Logan.

Town of York Historical Society – Kat Akerfeldt

Every March 6 the Town of York Historical Society commemorates the anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city, this year is the 187th anniversary. It will be online on zoom, a love letter to the city, a whole host of performers and historians, there will be behind the scenes tours of the museum, ghost town tours, and Bruce Bell! Information can be found at townofyork.com

JAMII – check it out <https://www.jamii.ca/>

Ward 13 – Edward LaRusic

There was a move by Metrolinx to expropriate part of the First Parliament site and they are now stepping back from this work. The masterplan process will continue and we understand the need to build transit but we want to make sure that the future of the First Parliament site reflects the master plan.

The work on Wellington - TTC track replacement is beginning on March 8, and then the streetscape work between Yonge and Wellington will proceed, this is a project a decade in the making.

The next SLNA meeting will be the SLNA AGM, to be held on Wednesday, March 31, 2021.