

MEETING MINUTES
The Bloor Street East Neighbourhood Association (BENA)
Annual General Meeting

Monday, October 26, 2015 – 7 pm - 9 pm
333 Bloor Street East (Rogers Building, Sub-basement, Overflow Room)

Introductions

Speaker: Linda Brett, BENA President

- Welcome
- Acknowledgment of invited guests, Rogers' staff and Rogers for providing the meeting space, EN Consulting Group facilitator and notetaker, other residents'/neighbourhood associations and BENA Executive members present at the meeting
- Regrets from Minister Glenn Murray's office (noted that a representative from his office, Angus Affleck, was present).
- Noted that Ward 27 Councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam was delayed, but would be represented at the BENA AGM by staffer, David Simor.
- Explanation of the AGM's agenda
- Request for questions to Rogers or to Greenrock regarding the mall and office tower.
[There were none.]

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATION

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer, Representative of the Toronto Police Services, 53 Division
(<http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/d53/>)

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer covered three major concerns in the area, vagrancy, cycling and traffic violations in his presentation.

Vagrants:

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer said that Yorkville is a draw for vagrants because it is a high-end area where homeless people can secure money and food from restaurant and store patrons, restaurant staff and residents. This access to resources makes Yorkville a comfortable area for

vagrants and presents a challenge in terms of getting rid of the vagrancy problem.

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer said that Bloor Street has similar issues with many high-end businesses, ready cash and patrons, restaurant staff and residents enabling vagrants by giving them food and money.

Police do ask vagrants to move along but as many of the homeless are not interested in living indoors it just means that they will move to another area.

The Police service has begun to use a Mobile Crisis Intervention Team, consisting of a police officer and a nurse to try to address mental health issues in the homeless population. The Mobile Crisis Intervention Team has been deployed in the [BENA] area and can do some follow up in the future.

Cycling:

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer said that there has been an issue with cycling on sidewalks. He said that the law says that persons under the age of fourteen can ride their bikes on the sidewalk. Bike riding on the sidewalk for persons over the age of fourteen is illegal and subject to a fine of \$60-\$80.

Enforcing the law against cycling on the sidewalks, however, is a challenge.

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer said that bicycle couriers present another issue as they often don't respect the rules of the road and are focused instead on taking the quickest route from A to B.

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer thinks that the police need to send a stronger message to bicycle messengers.

Traffic Violations:

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer noted that unpaid tickets are not linked to drivers' licenses, so tickets may or may not be paid. Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer has heard that the Province may be considering legislation to rectify this.

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer has told his police officers not to inform traffic law breakers of the fact that the tickets are not tied to drivers' licenses unless they ask.

Question and Answer Period

Question: What can be done to address the problems (drug use, violence and animal abuse, lack of lighting and police patrols) in the row of parks near Hayden (ex: George Hislop Park)?

The questioner mentioned an 8 am stabbing in George Hislop Park and said that violence in the area seems to be escalating. The questioner suggested that the fence between Sanctuary and the park be eliminated as it is a point of congregation.

Answer: Sanctuary [a charity adjacent to the park that offers drop-in services to the homeless]

presents challenges. Staff Sergeant Moyer said he would follow up with Peter True to get directed patrols in the area. He said police presence between midnight and six in the morning would have to be via car patrol.

Question: Is there a number to call for homeless people sleeping on the street?

Answer: 416-808-2222, the Police non-emergency line. But usually if we move them from the street they will just go to another place, like a park.

Question: A right [turn] on Sherbourne and Bloor isn't allowed but drivers don't seem to be aware of this. What can be done?

Answer: Call the Division (51) to flag the location. It will be the same offenders consistently. Describe the problem in detail in an email and ask for a response with an action plan.

Question: Regarding bikes, there are no helmets or lights for bikes at night.

Answer: A lack of lights is enforceable but it's labour intensive.

BUSINESS MEETING

Mark Daye, the BENA Secretary was not able to be present, due to an emergency.

Declaration of Service of Notice and Call to Order

Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting (November 6, 2014)

President Linda Brett said that the previous AGM's minutes (November 6, 2014) were mailed to members and are also available on the BENA website.

[Archived minutes are available at <https://blooreast.wordpress.com/> under Reports]

Motion to waive the reading and approval of the previous minutes

Mover: Teresa Tedesco

Seconder: Susan Gerhard

Presentation of Financial Statements

Presenter: Blair Kissack, BENA Treasurer

Motion to Waive Appointment of Auditors

Mover: Blair Kissack

Secunder: Don Burgess

Motion carried.

Election of Directors

Facilitator: Tatiana Jaunzems of EN Consulting Group (<http://www.enconsulting.ca>)

The floor was opened to the nomination of three directors.

Incumbent directors (Linda Brett, President; Mark Daye, Secretary and Blair Kissack, Treasurer) self-nominated. No other nominations were received.

Motion to Close Nominations

Mover: Walker Young

Secunder: Halyna Kozar

Motion carried.

The BENA Directors (Linda Brett, President; Mark Daye, Secretary and Blair Kissack, Treasurer) were acclaimed.

President's Report - Highlights

Presenter: Linda Brett, BENA President

The President Tabled the Activities and Tracking Report for the Month of October as the report from the Executive Committee of BENA.

The President's Report highlighted the Ward Boundaries review and the need to ensure that the ward boundary is placed in Rosedale Valley Ravine versus down the middle of Bloor Street.

Linda Brett explained the benefits of incorporation to BENA as an organization

- Limits liability for association members
- Allows for the organization to be more accountable to the Province and its members
- Account transparency
- Allows for easier OMB proceedings
- Allows BENA to apply for grants from government. Incorporation is a standard requirement for this kind of grant.

The audience had no questions regarding the President's Report.

Please contact BENA at info@blooreast.org for a copy of the President's Report

Motion to Close Business Meeting

Mover: John Burt

Seconder: Don Burgess

Motion carried.

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATION

David Simor, Advisor, Policy and Community Relations, the Office of Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, Ward 27 (dsimor@toronto.ca)

Noise in the Area

There are a lot of noise complaints that come into the Councillor's office.

Since the noise by-laws are out of date, Councillor Wong-Tam has asked the City's Municipal Licensing and Standards Division for a review of the noise-related bylaws. The City staff is working on finalizing the report now. It should be finished in early 2016, possibly in January.

There were public consultations, in service of the review, this past Spring and Summer.

If you want to know more about the review, you can request more information from Councillor Wong-Tam's office.

Casey House (on the corner of Huntley and Isabella)

Councillor Wong-Tam has made inquiries about a future use for the building. One idea is that it will be kept for a community health use, instead of being removed for high rise development.

Toronto Core Study

Councillor Wong-Tam asked Toronto's City Planning department to undertake a report on growth and downtown infrastructure. The first phase report should be available in November 2015 for Toronto-East York. BENA was very involved in the first phase report. The study will examine issues such as setbacks, urban design policy, transportation strategy, pedestrian and cycling use, surface travel, demands on the infrastructure and growing facilities in the core.

If you want to know more about the study, you can request more information from Councillor Wong-Tam's office.

Bloor East Revisioning

At the last BENA AGM, Councillor Wong-Tam mentioned the revisioning and asked for your feedback and ideas.

There have since been meetings with stakeholders and there are now initial designs that will be presented in early December regarding streets, trees, benches, etc.

Thanks to BENA for all of their hard work on the revisioning.

Question and Answer Period

Comment: John Burt mentioned a situation at a Bloor Street apartment building where the garbage contractor was not respecting the noise bylaws and was arriving too early in the morning. He noted that a call to Councillor Wong-Tam's office fixed the problem.

Question: How long will the redesign take?

Answer: Can't give a definite timeline. Roughly one construction year.

Questions – regarding the plans for and status of 387-403 Bloor Street East

Answers: There have been three different owners of the property and three different planners assigned to it. There has been an OMB proceeding (in July) following a Council hearing. There is a settlement, though a set of requirements need to be cleared before the settlement can go through.

The current plan is for approximately 50 stories that include a hotel and a condo component.

BENA REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation Team: Walker Young and Carlos Benzecri

Charles and Hayden Update and Streetscape Redesign

Presenter: Walker Young

Walker Young is an owner-resident at 50 Hayden Street. His presentation covered the Charles-Hayden neighbourhood.

1 Bloor Development

1 Bloor is under construction. Plan to finish next year. The property has changed ownership. Large impact on Yonge and Bloor. Big impact on Hayden.

Casa II and III Development

42 and 50 Charles Street East

This development is located where the YMCA and Post Office used to be. Casa II is residential only. Casa III is a mixed commercial and residential building. The two buildings share a joint courtyard and public walkway.

BENA has been working with the developer and the Councillor's office. There is a site plan working group. BENA has been addressing noise and garbage issues with the developer, who has been listening to BENA. BENA was meeting with the developer bi-monthly, now the meetings happen as issues arise.

628 Church Street (corner of Church and Charles)

This is being built by Aspen Ridge Homes. There is a heritage building on this corner. The developer wants to keep the heritage feel and so will elevate the high rise above the existing heritage building so that it isn't obscured.

Toronto Grace Hospital

Toronto Grace Hospital is undergoing internal updates. They are redoing windows and fire systems. The building's footprint will stay the same. The renovation will mean construction and scaffolding.

TPA Parking Garage

Two floors will be added to the parking garage. Construction will start next year and will continue for twelve months. This renovation is happening because of an increased need for parking.

New Streetscape for Charles and Hayden between Church and Yonge

Two public consultation meetings have happened. BENA has asked for increased greenery, finishes, lighting and street furniture. There will be a large public consultation early in the new year.

Park on Charles

This park consists of green space around the Hydro sub-station between Church and Ted Rogers Way. There has been damage to the green space there due to construction. The area is Provincial land, so BENA has to follow up with the province about improvements to the park.

Street lights

Many of the street lights in the area are not working. BENA is dealing with the Yorkville BIA and

with Hydro to resolve this issue.

On-going Maintenance/311

We are regularly focused on maintenance and call 311 regularly about graffiti, trash and street lights in the area. We want to encourage residents to call 311 so that complaints will have weight.

Question and Answer Period

Question: [From a member of a neighbouring residents' association] Are you satisfied with community benefits (Section 37) that you received from the developers in this area? What kinds of goals are you looking for from every development project?

Answer: We want cooperation from developers. We set long-term goals and have working groups to get green space, lighting, cleanliness, foot traffic, bike and car traffic control. We do want to see more Section 37 money spent in the area.

Comment from the audience: BENA has asked for money to be given for immediate impact in the immediate area.

Linda Brett, BENA President: BENA has a master plan for streetscapes. We want to see monies whether they are Section 37 or not used to benefit the neighbourhood. It was noted that the Councillor recently stated that it was her belief that not enough money had been put into the Charles/Hayden Streetscape from the developers on those two streets.

Question: Have you been asking for affordable housing?

Answer from the audience: 10% always goes for that. Many developers have greater than 10% affordable housing.

Question: Will the parking garage close down during its renovation?

Answer: Parking will still be available but the businesses there will be closed.

Question – regarding seeing a City of Toronto car whose driver appeared to be counting jaywalkers at the northeast corner of Hayden. Questioner said that a crosswalk is needed in that location because of the TTC entrance on Hayden and asked whether a pedestrian crosswalk could be put in there?

Answer: David Simor from Councillor Wong-Tam's office said that he would follow up to find out whether there is a traffic study in the works for that corner and whether a pedestrian crosswalk is planned. He said that the City staffer may have been there because of the planned streetscape re-design.

Comment: Since X2 was occupied, one way street signage has not been well-marked.

Answer: David Simor said that Councillor Wong-Tam's office has requested that more signs be added.

Comment: John Burt said that 311 reports have become more difficult.

Answer: David Simor said that he would follow up with the 311 manager.

Bloor Street Streetscape Re-design and Results of Open Streets TO Feedback

Presenter: Carlos Benzecri

The BENA team surveyed participants on Bloor Street during Open Streets TO, an event during which streets are opened to people and closed to cars.

Participants were asked for improvements they want to see to the area.

Top preferences expressed in their responses were for...

- Bike lanes
- Green spaces and public spaces
- Retail and food spaces
- Trees and plants
- Benches and street furniture
- Streetscape continuity along Bloor Street East

(Please request the presentation from BENA at info@blooreast.org for the full list of responses)

Question and Answer Period

Question: Will Open Streets continue?

Answer: David Simor said that the program would continue.

Rosedale Valley Ravine and Parkland Revitalization

Presenter: Carlos Benzecri

Carlos Benzecri showed photos of the entrances to the Rosedale Ravine from the BENA area:

- Park Road – the only mobility-challenged accessible entrance

- Collier Street
- 300 Bloor Street East
- 360 Bloor Street East
- Re kai Parkette
- Wellesley Park

He touched on attributes of each entrance and then summarized the openness of use of Rosedale Ravine to people in the area as follows:

Rosedale Valley Today

- There are no inviting entrances
- No signage
- Is not accessible to people with mobility issues
- Is not well-lit
- There are no trash or recycling bins

In short, it does not encourage use.

BENA sees recreational use of Rosedale Valley as an opportunity as it is a large, downtown, green space and has tried to get funding to improve its deficiencies.

Carlos Benzecri detailed the funding sources BENA has tried to tap in order to make changes that would make use of the Ravine easier for residents.

For more information on this project, please contact BENA at info@blooreast.org

Question and Answer Period

Comment: An attendee expressed support for the idea of Rosedale Valley Ravine Parkland Revitalization.

Question: Another attendee suggested creating a circular walk over the Don Valley to encourage walkers and asked whether this idea was already being considered.

Answer: Carlos Benzecri said that such a path would involve several jurisdictions which might make getting it approved difficult.

Another BENA member added that the City of Toronto is currently doing a Ravine Consultation and that there are funds to improve the ravine that could be accessed. He noted that there is a plan for the lower Don that would see increased access across the Don River but that a Bayview bridge would be costly.

Motion to Close Meeting [End of Informal Portion of the Meeting]

Mover: John Burt

Secunder: Don Burgess

Motion carried.

Closing

Linda Brett thanked attendees for coming and urged them to join the BENA e-mail list via info@blooreast.org.