

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

Tuesday, October 25, 2016 – 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, elected officials, other residents'/neighbourhood associations and BENA Executive members present and absent from the meeting.

BUSINESS MEETING

Mark Daye, the BENA Secretary was not able to be present and sent his regrets.

Declaration of Service of Notice and Call to Order

Minutes of Meetings of Previous Annual General Meeting (October 26, 2015)

President Linda Brett said that the previous AGM's minutes (October 26, 2015) were mailed to members and are also available on the BENA website.

[Archived minutes are available at <https://blooreast.wordpress.com/2015/10/19/2015-agm/>]

Motion to waive the reading and approval of the previous minutes

Mover: Walker Young

Secunder: Paul Wong

Motion carried.

Presentation of Financial Statements

Presenter: Linda Brett, BENA President presented in Blair Kissack, BENA Treasurer's stead, as he was absent and had sent his regrets.

Motion to Waive Appointment of Auditors

Mover: Terry Tedesco

Seconder: Walker Young

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) .

Nominations presented were for Linda Brett, Mara Epstein and Blair Kissack.

A nomination from the floor for Christine Inglis (Nominator: Walker Young) was received. Linda Brett said that Blair Kissack had agreed to withdraw his nomination for Director if someone else was nominated.

Motion to Close Nominations

Mover: Walker Young

Seconder: Paul Wong

Motion carried.

The BENA Directors (Linda Brett, Mara Epstein and Christine Inglis) were acclaimed and appointed.

President's Report - Highlights

Presenter: Linda Brett, BENA President

Linda Brett noted that the neighbourhood area has been broken up into zones allotted to BENA members for monitoring. She called for more volunteers to work these zones and for more attendees at BENA's monthly meetings.

Ms. Brett tabled the Activities and Tracking Report and reported on the Charles Street East Hydro Substation Lands (status, jurisdiction, and improvements); DVP access from Bloor Street South (with mention to a larger plan for the lower Don Lands) and the Ward Boundary Review at which she and other BENA members will be giving deputations.

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

Please contact BENA at info@blooreast.org or visit <https://blooreast.wordpress.com/> for a copy of President's Report (Activities and Tracking Report for October)

Chris Ostiguy, the Director of Facilities and National Projects for Rogers Communications, welcomed BENA to the Rogers Building and went through the security procedure necessary to leave the building.

Motion to Close Business Meeting

Mover: John Burt

Secunder: Christine Inglis

Motion carried.

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer, Community Response Unit, Toronto Police Services, 53 Division and Staff Sergeant Peter Troup, Community Response Unit, Toronto Police Services, 51 Division (<http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/d53/> and <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/d51/>)

Staff Sergeant Matthew Moyer covered two major concerns in the area, vagrancy, and cycling in his presentation. As regards vagrancy, he noted that his officers would soon be going into Rosedale Valley to relocate encampments of homeless, due to complaints the police had received from residents regarding drug use and discarded drug paraphernalia in the area.

Staff Sergeant Moyer also highlighted changes to the police budget that would mean that the police would be refocusing their efforts on essentials such as drugs, guns, violence and school-related issues and would no longer be responding to nuisance complaints related to noise, neighbour-to-neighbour and parking disputes. He said that 53 Division would be giving a presentation to the community on the changes in the near future.

Staff Sergeant Peter Troup introduced himself to those present as a veteran Toronto Police officer who has spent much of his career in the area now allocated to 51 Division and has worked downtown, in general, for many years.

Staff Sergeant Troup said that despite the fact that 51 Division is one of the city's busiest that its level of crime has remained low. He cited theft (particularly from vehicles and stores), mental health issues (much of it drug-related) and assault as the division's biggest crime issues. He noted that many of the incidents, such as theft from cars, are preventable (e.g. by securing valuables).

Troup mentioned the issues with Sanctuary [a church charity adjacent to a park that offers drop-in services to the homeless] and drug use and said that a beat liaison officer had been

assigned to the matter and had been working with Sanctuary and with the City's Park division to put sharps containers in place in the public spaces and to resolve the issues. He mentioned that he planned to attend BENA's upcoming meetings.

Question and Answer Period

Question: What is being done about bikes on the sidewalks on Bloor Street?

Troup: We carry out bike safety campaigns throughout the year. Bike lanes are in place and we do enforce their use.

Question: We had an intruder in the garage of our building who our concierge took down? Should he have tackled him? With the changes in what police will respond to, they wouldn't have come. What should we do?

Moyer: Residents and Security Guards should not confront. Instead, you should "sell" it as a priority when you call 911. Convey a sense of urgency so that it will be addressed.

Troup: Buildings have video surveillance. Not many people commit crimes – it's a small pool of people. Officers quickly identify them from video and images and they will get caught. So no need to confront them.

Question: Facing budgetary cutbacks in what way will we see changes in police operations?

Troup: You'll see changes in calls – which ones we'll attend and won't attend. We'll implement two-tier policing. There will be officers without guns and Tasers. About 500 armed officers and traffic wardens who are not officers. These are ways of cutting the budget.

Moyer: Essential services will not be reduced. We will work smarter. There will be officers in the neighbourhoods. Service will be better. We are not hiring and some officers are retiring but we will not slack off on service.

Glen Murray, MPP Toronto-Centre (<http://glenmurray.onmpp.ca/>)

HEALTH CARE

Glen Murray spoke of the many development projects happening in the area. In particular, he mentioned the renovations taking place at the local hospitals and health care centres:

Grace Hospital – rebuild and modernization of the hospital; to reopen in a few months

Casey House – will be an end-of-life hospice

Women's College Health Centre – rebuild

St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto Rehabilitation Institution, Mt. Sinai Hospital and Toronto General all are undergoing revitalizations worth millions of dollars.

Murray mentioned that the Province is also funneling money into increasing the number of personal support workers and into providing more homecare support.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Murray spoke of the Cap and Trade system that the Province will introduce in March 2017. He said it would be significant in terms of carbon price programs across the world.

HYDRO

Murray spoke of falling Hydro costs when the HST comes off the Hydro bill in 2017.

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Murray said that transit users should expect to see the electrification of public transit lines in future. Residents can also expect to see a new LRT that enables rapid transit. Murray mentioned the proposed links between the Danforth GO Station and the TTC's Main Street Station, which would allow travellers with the Presto card to move seamlessly between the two systems.

He said that plans for GO Transit include 3-6 unit electric trains and the electrification of all nine GO lines. These trains would be higher speed than the current diesel trains. The transformation will happen over the next six years – the largest such transit transformation in the GTA since the subway was introduced in the 1930s.

Mr. Murray said that in the interest of public safety, the provincial government is in negotiations with the federal government and commercial rail companies to exchange provincially controlled rail lines and rail right of ways for commercial rail lines that now route dangerous cargo through residential and urban areas.

CYCLING

Murray said that the Province was investing in cycling infrastructure but acknowledged challenges such as cars and trucks blocking bike lanes, Bloor not having a cycling lane yet, and needing better education for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. He noted that there are now fines in place for opening car doors on cyclists.

PEDESTRIANS

Murray said that there is a need for new rules to protect pedestrians in Ontario now.

Question and Answer Period

Question: 50% of cyclists wear helmets. Few use bells or lights. I see them tweeting while cycling. Are there any safety laws coming for cyclists?

Murray: I'm shocked by the lack of civility on the road by everyone. I rarely see carpooling. Motorists and cyclists are looking at their phones. Drunk driving used to be the largest cause of fatalities. Now that's been replaced by texting and phone use. There is a \$150 fine for parking in a bike lane but people are still doing it.

[Murray then spoke of needing police enforcement of the existing laws and of implementing cameras to monitor parking and speeding issues and in that way being able to identify problem areas].

Question: But what about helmets?

Murray: That's a disputed question. I wear one of course but I am more concerned with protecting others from cyclists.

Question: Why don't you start to license bicycles? Put clear plates at the front and the back. So we can take pictures and nail these people. Implement more draconian fines.

Murray: Interesting. We will look into it for next year. But licensing bikes is expensive. Electronic surveillance and policing can be less expensive. You have to have a commitment from the police service. Plates make sense with enforcement. Maybe we could do a pilot project.

Question: You mentioned the HST off Hydro for condos. Does that [exemption] include small community businesses?

Murray: It includes everybody. Lower income people can see \$30-\$50 off their bill now depending on the number of people in their household.

Question: For the cars in the bike lanes why not use towing. It would provide revenue for the city. On rail safety, we definitely have an issue with the Summerhill tracks.

Murray: These are City and Federal issues. I like the City's rules about truck drop off and stopping in the bike lanes. I do have great concerns about the amount of rail traffic through the area and the petrochemicals going through there.

Question: Is the Railway Act being challenged?

Murray: We are raising it with the Federal government almost weekly and we are negotiating with CN and CP to buy the tracks.

Question: What about confiscation?

Murray: We can't do that. We don't have jurisdiction. We can transfer the corridors meant for highways that won't be used. We can get rail tracks for TTC and GO in exchange for peripheral tracks. This transfer is going well. Bill Morneau has been helpful in that effort. We're working on the Lakeshore corridor – it would go to Hamilton (not just Aldershot). We are buying up the lines we can and turning them into GO Lines. It's a slow process. We have a willing partner in Ottawa. There are no destinations [for the cargo train lines] in Toronto – just peripheral destinations. So why keep these central lines?

Comment from Linda Brett, BENA president: You can buy a CP share which would entitle you to go to their AGM and raise a stir. One share gets you the ability to ask questions.

Kristyn Wong-Tam, City Councillor, Ward 27 Toronto Centre-Rosedale

Councillor Wong-Tam introduced staffer Edward LaRusic (edward.larusic@toronto.ca) who replaced David Seymour as a community liaison for the BENA area. She said that Edward and her office would be striving for as much continuity as possible.

Wong-Tam gave updates on the following projects:

The green space around the Hydro One substation - She said there were no longer Hydro One trucks parked there and that the City had installed two benches but that the City would need Hydro One's approval for more improvements to be made.

Ravines and bridges – Councillor Wong-Tam said that these were under stress but that a ravine strategy had been worked out to address the problem. Further, she mentioned that her office would be working with Evergreen Brickworks on the proposed Don River Valley Park (200 hectares of land - bigger than High Park) and Don River Trail. Part of this work would include making pathways more accessible and safer as well as putting in place cultural programming for the green space.

One of the attendees made a comment about linking youth to the green space, a sentiment with which Wong-Tam agreed.

In addition, Councillor Wong-Tam said that Charles and Hayden would see an improved pedestrian experience and that the Yonge Street Environmental Assessment had been launched

(with public consultation to follow).

Johanna Kyte, Senior Project Manager, City of Toronto (Public Realm, Transportation - Beautiful Streets)

Ms. Kyte gave a presentation on the scope, challenges, and status of the Bloor Street East Streetscape Improvements Project.

Challenges Kyte cited:

- Utilities needing to be relocated for intersection improvements
- Construction procedures require refinement for improved access
- Full City development/construction schedule and saturation in the area
- A need for more assessment of the infrastructure under the surface

Kyte said that these challenges would result in a delay of the implementation of the project beyond 2017 to 2019.

She said that the many other projects in the area in 2018 precluded its implementation then as additional work would mean negative impacts on traffic. In addition, she said, all of the City's resources had already been allocated for 2018 and coordination of the project and relocation of the utilities (affording for bridge structures) in 2018 would be difficult.

Ms. Kyte concluded that interim cut and repairs of road and sidewalk would happen in 2016 – with the permanent installation and more extensive aspects of the project needing to wait until 2019 for implementation.

Question and Answer Period

Question: [Attendee asked a very detailed question about a turn sight at Bloor Street E. and St. Paul's Square – asking about its status.]

Kyte: I don't know but I will follow up with Traffic Operations to find out.

Wong-Tam: This is a localized constituent's request. Traffic transportation staff have reviewed the matter and there has been a convergence of opinions. Please talk to me afterward for more detail.

Question: [Attendee asked about the LED no left and no right turn signs in the area. The questioner said he thinks the current signage is dangerous and ineffective and that there should be more.

Kyte: These signs were put in to improve traffic flow. I don't know if they will be expanding the

LED sign program. I can find out.

Question: I accept the new 2019 date but because of the danger of bikes and new signage, can you not put in temporary bike paths and pavement patching at Parliament?

Kyte: Once staff in cycling determine the permanent solution they will be able to determine if a temporary installation is feasible.

Question: At the intersection of Bloor Street and Parliament (north side on the bridge) there is no curb cut which does not meet the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Can you not just patch and modify the surface there so that it is accessible as an interim condition?

Kyte: It is hard to cut into the bridge structure there to put it in especially with the bike lane so close. We are studying it. Once staff determine a permanent solution they can advise on a temporary installation.

Linda Brett said that it was disappointing news that the project would not begin until 2019 and said that BENA's Operations Committee would have to look at how the delay would affect them. She noted that BENA kept getting promised things and then having them cancelled and/or delayed.

Motion to Adjourn

Mover: Walker Young

Secunder: Christine Inglis

Motion carried.

Closing

Linda Brett thanked attendees for coming.