

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

Monday, November 4, 2019 – 7 pm - 9 pm
333 Bloor Street East (Rogers Building – Main Floor)

Introductions

Speaker: Linda Brett, BENA President

- Welcome
- Acknowledgment of invited guests, Rogers' staff and Rogers for providing the meeting space, elected officials and their staff, other residents'/neighbourhood associations, the newest BENA member (St. Andrew's United Church at 117 Bloor Street East– represented at the AGM by Reverend Neil Young) and BENA Executive members and building representatives present and absent from the meeting.
- President Linda Brett mentioned the need for representatives from The X and 360 Bloor Street East due to recent member vacancies.

BUSINESS MEETING

Declaration of Service of Notice and Call to Order

William "Bill" Rankin, BENA's Secretary

Minutes of Meetings of Previous Annual General Meeting (Tuesday, October 30, 2018)

Motion to waive the reading and approval of the previous minutes

(Note that previous minutes are posted for viewing on the BENA website)

Mover: Walker Young

Seconder: Paul Wong

Motion carried.

Presentation of Financial Statements

Presenter: Mara Epstein, Treasurer

Ms. Epstein's presentation (figures are available on paper and were on-screen at the meeting) was succinct.

She said that BENA is in good financial standing with a fair number of contributing members and "a good amount of cash in the bank." Ms. Epstein mentioned that BENA has earmarked a surplus for

betterments and improvements to the area's streetscape. Ms. Epstein noted that development to revamp the BENA website had recently started and so members would notice web development-related costs in the statement.

There were no questions regarding the financial report.

Motion to Waive Appointment of Auditors

Mover: Bill Rankin

Seconder: Walker Young

Motion carried.

Election of Directors

Facilitator: Walker Young

The floor was opened to the nomination of three directors.

No nominations (other than the self-nominations of the incumbent Executive members: Linda Brett, President, Bill Rankin, Secretary, and Mara Epstein, Treasurer) were forthcoming.

Appointment of Directors

The BENA Directors (Linda Brett, Bill Rankin, and Mara Epstein) were re-appointed by acclamation.

Santa Claus Parade Update

Speakers during this segment of the AGM: Chris Ostiguy of Rogers, BENA President Linda Brett, and BENA Treasurer Mara Epstein

(The parade route and information were displayed on a screen behind the speakers for the benefit of the attendees.)

President Linda Brett informed attendees that the Santa Claus Parade was scheduled for 17 November 2019.

Ms. Ostiguy and Ms. Brett spoke about road closures quite early in the day, starting in the east. President Brett spoke about how the road closures would prevent access to several driveways and urged residents to think about how they would get around during the parade.

Ms. Brett noted that the 360 and 388 Bloor East buildings' driveways would be completely blocked. She said that BENA was working to create alternative parking arrangements and asked members to consult the BENA website about the Parade.

President's Report

Presenter: Linda Brett, BENA President

Ms. Brett tabled BENA's latest (2019) Activities and Monitoring Report.

She said that highlights from this document would form the core of her President's Report. Attendees were referred to the document (handed out at the meeting) for details.

Invitation to the Operations Committee Meetings: Ms. Brett noted that BENA is open to new members and meets monthly– the next Executive meeting being on 27 November 2019.

BENA's Geography: President Brett displayed the BENA footprint. Ms. Brett pointed out the inclusion in the BENA neighbourhood of two City wards with two attendant councillors

Appeal for 311 Report Volunteers: 311 Reports should be everyone's responsibility Ms. Brett said. Usually John Burt regularly walks the area and makes 311 reports but as he is on an extended vacation Ms. Brett said other members' help is needed.

Update on Temporary Sign By-laws: This item pertains to temporary signage, such as sidewalk A-Frames. BENA had given input into this process but the legislation was referred back to Staff from City Council recently on a narrow portion of the report. The non-controversial portion of the proposed legislation has to do with limits on real estate signs put out for open houses, having been developed in conjunction with the real estate association, Ms. Brett said. She said that she hopes that the report will come back with the problematic part left out for further review and that the remainder can get passed. The controversial portion of the legislation related to advocacy signs, only one of the various types of signs included.

Streetscape and Public Realm Updates:

- Charles-Hayden - BENA is trying to get back on track regarding this area.
- The Glen Road Bridge is expected to be replaced next year. BENA attended all of the meetings and so far, the project is on schedule
- The Bloor Street East Rebuild and Streetscape - The construction phase of the project can only move forward when the Glen Road Bridge has been completed. Based on the feedback BENA has had for the Rebuild, it seems that the planning for the revision has started and the environmental assessment process has also begun.
- The development of a new planning framework for the Old Village of Yorkville (which includes most of the BENA footprint), being dealt with by the Bloor Yorkville Advisory Committee, is underway and BENA expects to work on it in the new year.
- BENA conducted two area walks this term, one with Angela Surdi from Councillor Layton's office in May and the other with City planners. Councillor Layton's office has since addressed many of the identified issues and is still working on others. Some examples of issues BENA identified during the walk: Garbage around the Hayden TTC exit and area restaurants; Missing

street lights and signage (Councillor Layton's office worked to get a left turn sign put up outside of 333 Bloor Street East and to have a flashing light, scheduled to be put in place in 2020 on Mount Pleasant Road).

- The term's second BENA inspection walk was with community planners from the Downtown and Midtown Sections. This second walk focused on the area south of Bloor St East and its findings will feed into the Bloor-Yorkville study.
- BENA is planning a walk for next Spring that will also tie into the Bloor-Yorkville study with the Midtown Planning section and multiple neighbourhood/residents' associations - to look at the Ravine.
- BENA is forging relationships with neighbourhood associations new to it: Due to the realignment of the wards, BENA has begun to develop relationships with residents' associations such as the Annex and Harbord Village and to make new contacts within St. Jamestown, President Brett said.
- Ms. Brett noted that cross-association meetings with the St. Jamestown Residents' Association have resulted in a motion to Toronto City Council to look at moving the crosswalk on Sherbourne at Selby to the north side and to reconsider the placement of the 75 Sherbourne bus stop.
- The Special Committee on Governance: Ms. Brett said that she had attended the Committee's last meeting in order to show support for continuing the Committee. She said that two to two ties in the Committee meant that they got movement on very few substantive motions, managing only to address small items and that many matters were not successfully concluded.

After this last President's Report item, Ms. Brett asked for questions from those assembled. Hearing none, she called for a motion to conclude the business portion of the meeting.

Motion to Conclude Business Portion of the AGM

Mover: Walker Young

Seconder: Paul Wong

Motion carried.

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Walker Young welcomed two Toronto City Planning – Community Planning – Downtown Section Representatives. He noted that Planning has been a good partner of BENA's over the years:

Manager, Downtown Section, David Sit
Planner, Downtown Section, Matthew Zentner

Mr. Sit described the Downtown Section's footprint as running from University Ave in the west to the Don River in the East and from Front Street north to Bloor. The Section, he said, also goes west all the way over to Spadina and takes in the University of Toronto's St. George campus.

Mr. Sit said that most of his work focus in the past has been in [the former Ward 27] Ward 13 where there are many development applications. As such, he has worked closely with Councillor Wong-Tam and since the reconfiguration of the wards has also begun to work with Councillor Layton.

Mr. Sit said that the presentation had been designed to give an overview of planning at the provincial and municipal levels and its terminology as well as to give updates to the development proposed and happening in the BENA footprint (with Mr. Zentner tasked with delivering this latter information).

He said that Matthew Zentner is the planner and point person for the BENA geography.

Regulatory Frameworks

Mr. Sit explained that the development process in Toronto is guided by higher-level provincial plans. He gave the examples of the Growth Plan (an area-specific plan focused on the “Greater Golden Horseshoe”), the Provincial Policy Statement (province-wide) and the Green Belt policy (pertaining to southern Ontario).

[Please see the Addendum for links to the policies and planning tools mentioned in Mr. Sit’s presentation]

Mr. Sit explained the provincial Growth Plan as being about “where we want to direct growth.” It sets out specific targets in terms of indicators such as density and jobs across southern Ontario and speaks to heritage concerns, transportation and servicing, he said.

The Green Belt areas, Mr. Sit explained, are “where we don’t want development. We want to protect those areas.” He gave the example of the Niagara tender fruitlands which he said were to be preserved for agriculture.

Mr. Sit spoke of the Provincial Policy Statement as a companion document to the Growth Plan, as its policy tests are not as strong as those of the Growth plan and it sets out province-wide policy while the Growth plan is area-specific to the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Official Plan, he said, lays out Toronto’s implementation of the higher-level provincial plans. It is a blueprint for growth and development in Toronto over the next decades. Through this more local focus of planning each municipality can exercise latitude in how they implement the dictated provincial policies. The Official Plan includes important maps and schedules alongside policy.

Mr. Sit highlighted the urban structure map as being a key planning document and displayed a section of one in which he had zeroed in on the downtown area, where he said a significant amount of growth should take place given that it is well served by transit, has a large employment base, hospitals and entertainment.

He noted that growth does happen elsewhere in the city. Sit said that there are various employment

areas, avenues and city centres where significant growth is planned for and anticipated (examples: along Kingston Road, Eglinton Avenue, Scarborough Centre, at Yonge and Eglinton and Etobicoke Centre).

Mr. Sit next presented a land-use map on which he had highlighted the BENA area. He noted the various kinds of structures and development in the area – pointing to some stable areas, mixed-use areas (this is where growth would be targeted, in particular for office, commercial and residential development), parks and open space and institutional space.

Mr. Sit described, TO Core, a secondary plan specifically for the downtown area. TO Core speaks to issues important to downtown areas such as shadow policies, parks and the width of sidewalks. He said that TO Core is meant to refine some of the Official Plan policies and to direct growth in a more granular fashion. TO Core defines particular classes of area for growth. He gave the example of Mixed-Use Areas 1, 2 and 3 designations as noted in TO Core, each with differing limits for development.

Mr. Sit also spoke about a site and area specific policy called 211 which helps to set the height peak for the area [that includes Ramsden Park, the Yorkville Triangle, Asquith Collier, and the Village of Yorkville]. He said that under 211, the highest buildings should be around Yonge and Bloor, growing less tall as one moves away from Yonge and Bloor.

Sit said that several design guidelines support his Section in the development proposal review process, helping to define building heights, setbacks, setbacks from the sidewalk, and landscaping.

He said that the zoning bylaw further “creates a building envelope. The zoning tells us how high a building should be, how far back a house should be set back, how much landscaping should be on the property.” Mr. Sit showed an illustration of the zoning elements applied to properties.

Mr. Sit said that most of the time when Planning receives development applications, it is an application to try to amend the zoning bylaw as many of the zoning provisions are outdated and don't represent the growth expectations for Toronto going forward. Community meetings, he said, are usually about zoning bylaw amendments.

While amendments aimed at the Official Plan do happen, Mr. Sit said, they are rare, although he noted that the City itself has made amendments to the Official Plan and the zoning bylaw. Sit gave the TO Core policy as an example of this.

Development Process

Mr. Sit showed a flowchart of the development process and talked about its different possible outcomes and phases:

Pre-application stage – Sit said that planning receives many pre-application inquiries. These more informal meetings and inquiries can often not lead anywhere. He gave the example of the Filmore's strip club (212 Dundas Street East; at George Street) for which there have been multiple inquiries but no official submitted application.

When an application is submitted – Mr. Sit said that even though City Planning is responsible for issuing a final recommendation and report to Council on any application that they are just one of the departments that reviews development applications and therefore has input in the development process. He mentioned the City's Engineering, Transportation, and Heritage Planning departments as participants in the process as well as external entities such as Hydro, the school boards, and the TTC.

Mr. Sit said that the whole involved process, including the circulation of the application, community meetings and what are often multiple revisions happens under immense time pressure.

He noted that there are specific legislative timelines that must be met as part of the development process. If they are exceeded, Mr. Sit said, an application could be appealed, on that basis, by the applicant to the LPAT (Local Planning Appeals Tribunal, "an independent administrative tribunal responsible for hearing appeals on a variety of contentious municipal matters." See <https://www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/local-planning-appeal-tribunal> for more information).

Community consultation – Mr. Sit said that as part of the process, Planning sends a preliminary report on proposed projects to Community Council which then has the prerogative to go ahead and give permission to start community consultation. Mr. Sit said that at that point, a notice of an upcoming community consultation may be posted on the property and residents may receive an invitation to a community consultation session in the mail.

At the community consultation, at which the local councillor is often present, he said, Planning staff and often the property developers introduce the project to the community.

Mr. Sit said that the community consultations can take different forms – that they could be open houses, presentations with following Q&A sessions or workshops where people are sitting around tables talking about specific issues they may be concerned about.

Planning will not be ready at that point to make any decision as to whether or how the project will go ahead, as the community consultation is a means of gathering necessary feedback to inform their decisions.

Following community consultations and one or two revisions to the proposal/application, Mr. Sit said, that Planning may get to the stage where they are satisfied with the application.

Planning then prepares a report that will go to Community Council where he said there is an opportunity for the public to weigh in on the proposal via deputations. Community Council's decision on the proposal will then be forwarded to the larger City Council to be voted on.

Zoning bylaw vs. Site plan review – Mr. Sit closed with a clarification of the process in terms of the zoning bylaw application versus the site plan review. He reiterated that the zoning bylaw application pertains to the “building envelope” while the site plan governs what the building will look like (in terms of building materials, garbage areas, loading docks, bicycle and car parking). The two applications usually run concurrently, he said but are separate processes.

Mr. Sit noted that in the past, Planning has worked with Councillor Wong-Tam's office to hold site

plan working groups to gain input from the community on that aspect of development applications.

Development Updates

Matt Zentner, the planner assigned to the Downtown (south of Bloor), gave updates on applications under review and development underway in the BENA footprint:

- Northwest corner of Church and Charles: Re-zoning passed a couple of years ago, conditionally. Its conditions were satisfied last year. The site plan application is still under review.
- 55 Charles Street - Recently went through the review process with the site plan just approved. Construction start is expected sometime next year as some tenant relocation needs to take place first.
- Northeast corner of Church and Charles (current Traders building with the Croissant Tree restaurants in it). No application yet. Developers have had some meetings with the community with the involvement of Councillor Layton's office.
- 387 Bloor Street East – This will be a combination condo and hotel unit property. It was originally approved at 52 storeys but adjusted via Committee of Adjustments to have an additional three storeys - an additional twenty units. The site plan has been approved. Construction is underway.
- Northeast corner of Sherbourne and Howard - Tower under site plan review. The project will incorporate publicly-accessible, privately-owned space around the heritage buildings off Sherbourne St. The application is moving through the process.
- Southeast corner of Sherbourne and Howard – This is a project approved for rezoning a couple of years ago. The site plan approval went through in the last year and the property is currently under construction.

Mr. Zentner told attendees that if there are questions about these specific projects that they could reach out to him.

Question and Answer Period

Question: Do you consider the density of the area when approving new buildings?

Answer: David Sit said that Planning always looks at the way the building is positioned, the masking of the building, and the building's shadow on open spaces, the pedestrian realm, and parks. He gave the example of the McGill-Granby neighbourhood where, as many of the buildings are low-rise, Planning in reviewing applications, would be mindful of taller buildings overshadowing them.

Question: A follow-up clarification of the question, that what was being asked about was the number of people in the area, occurred.

Answer: David Sit answered that Planning looks at tower separation - better light and privacy between buildings. He spoke of the impact of the building itself, not building property line to property line, servicing constraints and transportation impacts being considered.

Question: A number of years ago it appeared and I thought that the City Planning department was going to be trying to create a better setback for the tall buildings from the sidewalk to make it more pedestrian-friendly. It doesn't appear when you look – especially the ones that are being built down Jarvis Street - that that is happening at all. It looks like the setbacks, it's practically none and it's making it very unfriendly for pedestrians.

Answer: Mr. Sit said that Planning is aware that sidewalks are crowded but noted that there are often competing interests in terms of sidewalks where there are heritage buildings. He gave the example of Yonge Street where the sidewalks are crowded and there are also a lot of heritage buildings. He said that to get greater setbacks often it would require moving or tearing down heritage buildings – incompatible with the goal of protecting them. Mr. Sit explained that what the City asks for is sidewalk space at least six meters wide where a developer is able to push their building off their property line and give more space. This is one of the TO Core policies that the City is trying to enforce, Mr. Sit said.

Question: You say you always look at transportation – TTC. Have you considered that when you started building 1 Bloor Street East and now 1 Bloor Street West? The subway is already overcrowded right now, how can it accommodate more, because you're not building another subway entrance there?

Answer: Mr. Sit responded that Planning sends proposals to the TTC and also sends them to the Transportation department. He said further that he appreciates that Yonge and Bloor is a heavily travelled station and that the city is working on transit projects intended to take the pressure off Yonge and Bloor. Mr. Sit highlighted the Downtown Relief Line (now called the Ontario Line) as such an example.

MPP's Report/Update

Presenter: Jessica Bell, MPP, University-Rosedale

Jessica Bell thanked all present for attending and introduced herself as the MPP for University-Rosedale, a riding that along with Toronto Centre lies within BENA's footprint).

Ms. Bell is also the NDP, Official Opposition's Transit Critic (which includes cycling, pedestrian safety, and traffic issues).

She said she wanted to give the attendees an update on happenings at Queen's Park that affect the residents in the riding (University-Rosedale).

She spoke of Bill 124 which proposes a wage cap on all public service employees and gives the

Cabinet and Treasury Board the ability to override contract negotiations with unions across the province. Bell said that the bill could have a powerful effect on lower-wage workers and may result in a wage freeze or reduction for these workers. She raised concerns about proposed Bill 132, namely how it would reduce the amount of fines that polluters are required to pay and officially doing away with the local planning appeals support centre, which she said will give communities less say in what happens in terms of development in their areas. Ms. Bell said that the local planning appeals support centres had been useful in helping individuals and neighbourhood associations challenge development to ensure that it would work in their communities.

She concluded by saying that she would continue to fight along with her Federal and municipal counterparts for what's best for University-Rosedale and that when communities speak up they see results. MPP Bell gave the examples of the Provincial government agreeing to fund children's autism services ("needs-based approach"), reverting to the previous sexual education curriculum, and relinquishing attempts to take provincial control of the TTC.

Elected Officials' Panel

Facilitator: Walker Young

- Jessica Bell, MPP, University-Rosedale
- Mike Layton, City Councillor, Ward 11 University-Rosedale
- Kristyn Wong-Tam, City Councillor, Ward 13 Toronto Centre

Not present at this AGM:

- Chrystia Freeland, MP, University-Rosedale (Minister of Foreign Affairs)
- Bill Morneau, MP, Toronto Centre (Minister of Finance)
- Suze Morrison, MPP, Toronto Centre (Critic, Tenant Rights; Critic, Urban Indigenous Issues; Critic, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Response; Member, Standing Committee on Justice Policy)

The panel format consisted of panelists responding to questions posed by association member Walker Young on neighbourhood safety and then a subsequent question and answer period open to the attendees.

After Mr. Young explained the format of this segment of the meeting, the panelists introduced themselves and then the Q&A began:

In her introduction, Councillor Wong-Tam expressed gratitude for the attendees and detailed the geographical boundaries of Ward 13, talked about the large number of residents, students and others

who fill the ward.

Councillor Layton also laid out the boundaries of his ward (Ward 11). He thanked Councillor Wong-Tam from whom, with the reconfiguration of the City's wards, he has taken over responsibility for certain downtown areas, for having left the areas in which she worked in good shape. He spoke of the last few years as being ones of austerity during which the focus has been on keeping taxes low for those with money and property. He said that the City has not been able to capture the money needed to create affordable housing and has not had the power of inclusionary zoning. Layton said that Councillors have needed “to fight for every nickel of the development charge” and every four years brings an additional fight to increase that levy against developers' powerful lobbying at City Hall and Queen's Park. He mentioned, too, struggles with the OMB. Councillor Layton said that there has been some progress for the area involved with the City's Parks, Forestry, and Recreation's Facilities Master Plan.

Speaking to this, Councillor Wong-Tam said that a new swimming pool will be opening soon at the Wellesley Community Centre. She said that she would be fighting for putting the John Innes Community Centre back into the capital fund as part of the 2020 budget.

Councillor Layton added that as part of the Facilities Master Plan that the City will build a new downtown community centre in the next few years. He said that the proposed site is the parking lot at Ramsden Park across the street from the Rosedale TTC station.

MPP Jessica Bell spoke of her background as a community organizer, the mother to two children and a Markham Street University-Rosedale resident. She said she is honoured to serve University-Rosedale.

Question: Many issues that we deal with at a local level are either controlled or influenced by the Province or the Federal government, so what are you going to do to improve communication between the levels of government and help us solve neighbourhood issues? I'm going to take a cue from Councillor Wong-Tam from one of the meetings we had with her when she said: “You have to ask what will *you actually* going to be doing?”

MPP Jessica Bell responded by saying, “Thank you that's an excellent question. I will say that I'm not going to try to steal the subway from Toronto and change the electoral system without talking to any Toronto resident.” She went on to say that she thinks that when it comes to intergovernmental cooperation that the starting point is always talking to residents. Ms. Bell says that is one reason that she canvasses twice a week so that she can hear concerns directly from residents. She also said that she talks regularly with Councillors Layton and Wong-Tam and with the office of MP Chrystia Freeland. She gave the example of working with Councillors Layton and Wong-Tam to enhance what she called the Ford government's deal with Mayor John Tory to not upload the subway in exchange for the City's approval of some new transit projects. Ms. Bell said that the Councillors and she collaborated on motions to make sure that maintenance would remain public and to make sure that the relief line would be built before the Yonge line extension to ensure access for local residents.

Councillor Layton said that organizing requires support from other levels of government. Sometimes, he said, this happens through cooperation, sometimes it's done through campaigning and bringing pressure to bear. Councillor Layton said that under the previous Provincial government he

had had good luck working with the Ministers of the Environment and Transportation and had also worked with the Premier to help get home energy loans through the City and the provincial government to change some rules around cycling infrastructure that allowed for it to be installed faster. With the current government, he said, there would be no progress without fighting for it. He says he has been coordinating efforts for childcare, the Board of Health (on which he sits) and Bill 108 and the pro-development build-up at Queen's Park. Councillor Layton said that he would work with the government if they would listen but thinks that listening will require pressure from the community.

Councillor Wong-Tam said, "We're fortunate in Toronto Centre to have Bill Morneau, the powerful Minister of Finance in our corner in Ottawa." She says that Minister Morneau is focused on helping Toronto and so the message she has been conveying through him is that Toronto needs \$900 million annually for the City of Toronto, \$300 million to specifically fund mental health services at a community level and \$600 million annually to build supportive housing for those who are street-involved and cannot live independently. An additional need, she said is for the Federal government to pass a mental health parity act that would mean that for every dollar spent for physical health that one dollar of corresponding funds would be spent for mental health. Councillor Wong-Tam said that in addition to requesting the aid of Minister Morneau that she will be taking part in a campaign to promote the measures, with which he hopes residents will get involved. She said that she and MPP Suze Morrison have shifted focus to the campaign because of growing homelessness, opioid and mental health crises. She noted that 32 percent of opioid calls in the City of Toronto is in Toronto Centre so the area must have adequate addiction treatment facilities. Councillor Wong-Tam asked BENA to amplify the concerns and call for the measures she mentioned. She noted that OMB had been reformed under the Wynne government but that all of that good work has been unraveled by the current provincial government.

Question: Over the last ten years our neighbourhood's density has increased substantially. You only have to visit the corner of Charles and Jarvis or pretty much any of our corners around here to see how this density has created an unsafe environment for all users of our streets - pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, whatever. What are you doing to keep sidewalks and roads safe?

Councillor Mike Layton spoke about having established himself as a cycling champion early on in his time on Council. He spoke about how cycling and walking are integral to having sustainable cities – emphasizing the importance of pedestrians and pedestrian safety. Councillor Layton said he wants to ensure that there is space for what he called the 8-80 crowd in Toronto. He said that he has fought alongside Councillor Wong-Tam for faster implementation of Vision Zero – which speaks to safety on our roads, protected bike lanes, and sidewalk pedestrian safety. He said that he has been working with cycling and walking advocates to provide greater safety on Bloor Street and in the rest of the ward.

MPP Jessica Bell said that "There is no question that there is a road safety issue" and that too many people are dying or are injured on the streets. She said that she is interested in looking at best practices in other cities and provinces. Ms. Bell said that she is advocating for safety cameras in community zones and school zones. She said that this move has been delayed in the province for many years but that Queen's Park is on track to approve it by December. She stressed the need to "hold their feet to the fire" to make sure that the change would happen. Ms. Bell said that she has been working to get a Vision Zero at the provincial level similar to what British Columbia has. She

said that each time a rebuild loan is given for a roadway there should be mechanisms in place to make sure that the design and infrastructure will reduce road deaths. Ms. Bell said that she has reintroduced a vulnerable road users bill first drafted by Cheri DiNovo. It would ensure that if someone is breaking the law when they injure or kill someone else that they will face stiffer penalties than a fine. Currently, there are often no other repercussions.

Councillor Wong-Tam highlighted the loss of the Jarvis bike lanes and the failure to have it adopted when the plan was reintroduced this year. She noted that “Sometimes it is difficult to get good things done at City Council especially when it pertains to protecting road users.” Councillor Wong-Tam mentioned what she called the “long overdue” project on cycling infrastructure on this section of Bloor and said that she hoped it will be done by the end of this term, as twelve years have passed since the plan had first come up – even though it faces no community opposition and funding is available.

She said that she has been working alongside accessibility activists to ensure a minimum 2.1-meter clearway on any sidewalk in Toronto as she acknowledges that not every sidewalk can have a six-meter width. So far, their sidewalk efforts have been unsuccessful as the restaurant lobby opposed them as it wanted to ensure that there would be sidewalk space for patios. She emphasized that it makes a huge difference when communities come out to support legislation.

Question: My [Walker Young's] follow up question on that is I spend most of my time as a pedestrian. I drive occasionally and cycle and I feel like there is a lot of discussion around cycling. That's great and I'm super supportive of it but I feel like our sidewalks are getting more and more dangerous. We see more and more people driving down there with bikes and they are getting more and more crowded. So, what's actually happening to improve that? Bike lanes are great, but as a pedestrian, you know, there are more and more times when I feel unsafe.

Councillor Layton said that he acknowledged the point. He went on to say that he thinks that the discussion about bikes and bike infrastructure versus pedestrian concerns takes centre stage because it is controversial and polarizing. He noted that at City Council there is usually immediate support for pedestrian safety and specifically the provisions of the City's Vision Zero plan, which he said include significant improvements aimed at pedestrians. Councillor Layton said that he supports better education for cyclists and stiff fines for those who break the law. At the same time, he said he is aware that some of the sidewalk cycling is happening because people feel unsafe on the road.

Question: You talk about Vision Zero. When will we actually be able to see the impact of Vision Zero?

Councillor Wong-Tam said that the challenge with Vision Zero has been getting its implementation accelerated. She said that Councillor Layton and she had tried unsuccessfully on several occasions to turn what was a five-year plan into a two-year plan and that the roll-out for Vision Zero was so poor that “18 months later we got Vision Zero 2.0.”

Councillor Wong-Tam went on to talk about Yonge Street upgrades to replace the water main as an opportunity for needed change. She said that the last time that Yonge Street had been upgraded was in the 1940s for the subway. As part of the upcoming upgrade, Councillor Wong-Tam said, there would be the opportunity to widen the sidewalk and perhaps push for full pedestrianization of Yonge

Street from Carlton-College down to Queen and then in the next phase of the water main upgrades from College-Carlton up to Davenport.

She said that such suggestions for change would probably create “a massive public fight” with “mostly corporate opposition” from those who would stress that cars should have unfettered access to parking garages and the Eaton Centre.

Councillor Wong-Tam said that the big question would be whether to take advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity and make dramatic change or to be more timid and put the street back exactly as it had been before the water main work.

Councillor Layton said that the City had rolled out Vision Zero, in the first two years, in the areas around schools.

Question: The third question is about homelessness and drug addiction. Over the past three years, our neighbourhood has experienced a considerable increase in visible homelessness and drug use to the point where people no longer feel safe in the neighbourhood, especially at night. What are you doing to find a solution for this issue?

Councillor Wong-Tam acknowledged that the ward is facing huge challenges on these fronts. She pointed out that municipal government is not tasked with providing mental health or addiction services – with these being the purview of the provincial and federal governments. Councillor Wong-Tam said that shelter services are a City responsibility and as such, they have been “desperately trying to expand the number of shelter beds” by a thousand. She noted that it is very difficult and expensive to site these facilities and get them up and open but all the same the City has made a full-on commitment to do so. Councillor Wong-Tam noted that 40% of new shelter users are newcomers, asylum seekers and refugees, fleeing political unrest and the effects of the climate crisis. She said that to secure the new needed beds and necessary additional services that the City would have to appeal to higher levels of government. She said that with Councillor Layton's help she has been working on an elevated, five-year service plan, the Downtown East Action Plan [see Addendum] which would provide enhanced city services such as hotspot pickup in laneways, streets and parks, and harm reduction advocates to do outreach to street-involved population. Councillor Wong-Tam said that dedicated police neighbourhood officers had already been deployed in the ward and that in this regard the community would be better served than anywhere else in the city. The greatest numbers of dedicated neighbourhood officers, she said, are located in Toronto Centre – with focus on St. James Town, Regent Park, Yonge Street, and Moss Park.

Question: What do those officers do?

Councillor Wong-Tam said that the neighbourhood police officers are dedicated to a catchment area, reachable by cell phone and patrolling on foot or bicycle. She said, “When it comes to crisis calls and regular day-to-day interactions, they are the ones walking your beat.” She pointed to the deployment of so many officers in the area because of residents' calls. She said demand for service is the main metric used to allocate police resources.

Councillor Layton said that Councillor Wong-Tam had given him far too much credit for the Downtown East Action Plan, something he said, she was 100% responsible for and that had pre-

dated the changes in ward boundaries. He acknowledged the challenges with homelessness and addiction throughout the downtown area.

Layton said that shelter and respite use is up by ten percent since last year (he noted that the shelters were almost at capacity last year) even though Toronto has not yet experienced very cold weather.

Aside from lack of space Councillor Layton pointed out that shelters are largely concentrated in a small geographic area on the waterfront. He said that the City is having great difficulty, even with funding, in finding adequate, new shelter space. Shelters he said, being comprehensive require more than beds, needing programme, activity, and class space to help people out of homelessness.

Layton emphasized the need to look after the street-involved population, as well, “so we don't have a situation like on Vancouver's East Side where we aren't dealing with stepping over needles but with stepping over bodies.”

Councillor Layton said that he has been working with the respite shelter at 21 Park Road (Collier-Asquith) to lessen its impact on the neighbourhood and surroundings. He mentioned “the men's shelter down the street” from where he lives is as a success story, saying that his office does not get calls about that facility. However, he says there does seem to have been a rise in antisocial behavior since a 24 hour McDonald's moved to that corner. He said he thought the bar crowd and alcohol were the cause of the violence.

MPP Jessica Bell said that as an Opposition critic that she fights hard to get attention for issues. She highlighted an affordable housing crisis in Toronto, citing it as critically connected to homelessness. “When housing is more affordable the homelessness rate drops”, she said. Rent controls and security of tenure are also important, Bell said. She stressed that more affordable housing construction needs to include the creation of supportive housing so that when people are facing mental health or addiction issues there are places, they can go. She mentioned in addressing addiction, working to maintain funding to keep St. Stephen's (in Kensington Market) safe injection site open. Bell said she plans to advocate for “the kind of economy where people can afford to live in the city,” pointing out that many homeless people are working but need more secure jobs and living wages.

Councillor Wong-Tam's staff handed out a document on the Downtown East Action Plan. She explained that the Downtown East Action Plan would likely be used as a template for use throughout the city and as such would need to be scalable and exportable. She said that, in short, the Plan calls for more mental health and addiction treatment programs and affordable housing for the area as it has been heavily affected by these challenges. Wong-Tam mentioned that Toronto Centre has 4.2 percent of Toronto's population but 33 percent of its overdose calls and 20 percent of its shelter beds. She told attendees that they can make a difference by talking to their MPs, as their MPPs are in opposition, while the federal government is sitting in a minority position and so may be more receptive to residents' concerns.

Walker Young asked for further questions from those assembled. Hearing none, he yielded the microphone to President Linda Brett for closing.

Ms. Brett asked for feedback on topics for the next AGM. She said BENA was currently considering

focusing on the ravine and the Rosedale Planning Study for next year.

Closing

Linda Brett thanked the attendees and speakers for attending.

ADDENDUM

BENA's Wards

Ward 13 University-Rosedale

http://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/94e0-2018_Polling_Ward_11.pdf

Ward 11 Toronto Centre

https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/94ba-2018_Polling_Ward_13.pdf

The City of Toronto's Special Committee on Governance [mentioned in the President's Report]

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/decisionBodyProfile.do?function=doPrepare&decisionBodyId=1945#Meeting-2019.GV5>

Policies Mentioned in David Sit's Planning Presentation

Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page215.aspx>

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>

Ontario's Greenbelt

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>

Toronto Official Plan and Guidelines

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/>

Chapter 6 of the Official Plan - Secondary Plans

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/chapter-6-secondary-plans/>

TO Core: Planning Downtown

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/tocore-planning-torontos-downtown/>

Toronto Urban Structure Map

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/973f-2-urban-structure.pdf>

Profile Toronto: How Does the City Grow?

Part 1: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-135021.pdf>

Part 2: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-135384.pdf>

Toronto's Site and Area Specific Policies

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/9832-city-planning-official-plan-chapter-7-saps.pdf>

Legislation Mentioned in MPP Jessica Bell's Presentation

Bill 124

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-124>

Bill 132

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-132>

Downtown East Action Plan

Summary

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-134604.pdf>

12-Month Plan

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/downtown-east-action-plan/downtown-east-12-month-action-plan/>

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM TORONTO'S CITY PLANNING COMMUNITY
PLANNING SECTION - DOWNTOWN
(Wards 10, 11 and 13)**

The Community Planning Section is responsible for development applications, Committee of Adjustments, area-based policy studies, Secondary Plans, community liaising, and input into city-wide policy studies.

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ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES' PANEL

Jessica Bell, MPP University-Rosedale (Riding Map: <https://bit.ly/2Ds9dg6>)

Previous to being elected, Ms. Bell was the founding executive director of TTCriders, which works to improve Toronto transit, has been a Ryerson University lecturer, the director of the California Food & Justice Coalition and an environmental justice advocate. She was elected to the Provincial legislature in 2018.

Official Opposition Critic - Transit
Member, Standing Committee on General Government
Party Affiliation: Ontario NDP

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Twitter: <http://twitter.com/JessicaBellTO>

Mike Layton, City Councillor, Ward 13 – University-Rosedale

Mike Layton is in his third term as a Toronto City Councillor having been first elected to City Council in 2010 and then again in 2014 and 2018. Previous to his election as a City Councillor, Layton was a deputy outreach director with the national environmental charity, Environmental Defence. He is the son of the late, former NDP federal Leader and former Toronto City Councillor Jack Layton and the step-son of former NDP MP (Trinity-Spadina) and Toronto City Councillor, Olivia Chow.

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Twitter: https://twitter.com/m_layton (@m_layton)

(website has been updated in terms of content, but has not yet integrated new Ward title, maps, etc.)

Twitter: http://twitter.com/m_layton

Councillor's staff present at the 2019 BENA AGM: Angela Surdi, Constituency Assistant

Kristyn Wong-Tam, City Councillor, Ward 11 – Toronto Centre

Kristyn Wong-Tam is in her third term as a Toronto City Councillor, having been first elected in 2010 and then again in 2014 and 2018. In addition to her position as Councillor, Wong-Tam is a real estate agent and business owner, formerly owning a Timothy's franchise in the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood and currently owning the KWT contemporary art gallery at Bathurst and Richmond Street West.

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Councillor's staff present at the 2019 BENA AGM: Edward LaRusic, Advisor to Councillor Wong-Tam