

The West Bend Community Association Minutes from February 19, 2014

In attendance: Chair: Des McComish, Jim Chisholm, Elena Verikaitis, Janice LeBlanc, Johanne Wilkins, Maurice Richter, Joe Costa, Peter Goddard, Dawn Buie, Andrew Wojcik.

Guests: Jim Roche, Chair, Junction BIA - presenting on their Streetscape Master Plan. Dawn Buie - presenting an update on the Junction Commons Project.

Welcome and introductions

Des introduced our guest, Jim Roche, of the Junction BIA.

Conversation with Jim Roche.

Jim discussed how a BIA is developed, governed and funded. Below is a synopsis of his key points:

The Junction BIA, formerly known as "The Junction Gardens BIA", has been around for over 40 years. Each business owner within the designated boundaries of the Business Improvement Area **must** be a member and pay a levy, collected by the City of Toronto. A property or business owner cannot opt out of the BIA. The Junction BIA runs West to Quebec Ave, East to Indian Grove, North and South side of Dundas West, including a section south at the No-Frills on Pacific and a section North including the Heintzman buildings. The boundaries of the BIA can be expanded (they are currently being discussed) but the city manages this decision.

The BIA is run by an elected Board, which includes two Councillors (Perks and Doucette). The term of this board follows the same schedule as the City of Toronto (2010-2014). This board determines the annual budget, which the City administers as a levy to the property owners (it's added to their property tax bill).

The Junction Arts Festival wasn't run by the Junction BIA, but rather the "Junction Forum for Arts and Culture". There was a mismanagement of funds on the part of the JFAC and therefore it will no longer be held. In its place, the Junction BIA is running the Summer Solstice Festival.

The Junction Music Festival was a huge success last year, but the property where the main stage was located (the future Duke condo development) will not be available this year, so the Junction BIA is looking for a new location for the main stage.

The Santa in the Junction event did not have dancers in the window last year as the liability from the standpoint of the dancers became too great. Instead, local businesses held a variety of workshops.

The Junction BIA is concerned (as is the WBCA) about the increased traffic the new retail complex at St. Clair and Keele will cause at the Dundas West and Keele intersection. It seems that neither Councillors Gord Perks nor Sara Doucette are too interested in taking the plunge to address this growing concern, as the dividing line of their wards falls exactly on Keele.

Section 37 funding from the Heintzman buildings is available to the Junction BIA to spend in the community (approx. \$137,000). There was no section 37 money generated by the Duke condo development.

The renovated warehouses on Vine Avenue are currently zoned "light commercial" so retail businesses (rumours have it that the Sweet Potato is considering this location) require a change in the zoning before they can move in.

It is very expensive to hold street festivals, as police officers have to be hired, barricades put up, permits have to be purchased, traffic has to be redirected etc. However, the BIA has access to a 50/50 cost-sharing program to improve the neighbourhood (for things such as park benches, etc.) and can apply for funding from the city. The BIA can also assist in obtaining insurance and permits for small-scale street parties (Dawn would like to host one on Heintzman). There is a City program that subsidizes store façade improvements and a City mural program.

To get additional information on the Junction BIA and their sponsored events, you can visit their website at thejunctionbia.ca. You can sign-up for newsletters and e-newsletters there.

Jim also discussed the "Streetscape Plan" being funded and spearheaded by the Junction BIA:

The "streetscape plan" is to come up with a blueprint to see how the Junction neighbourhood could develop over the next 5, 10, 20 years to become more attractive to visitors and the local community. A contract has been awarded and the first draft of this proposal is due at the end of February. The contractor has received plenty of input from the BIA and will consider such items as traffic flow, street signage, lighting, street furniture, parkettes, green areas, environmentally friendly materials, dark lighting, etc. A community meeting is scheduled for the week of March 24th (time and location to be determined) to review and provide feedback on the proposal submitted. After this review and a second proposal, the final proposal will be due in May. This will form the basis for future planning and is not a "final" solution. Contact Jim directly at: jfroche@gmail.com if you have any suggestions or thoughts you would like to pass on to the Junction BIA regarding this streetscape plan.

Dawn Buie provided an update on the Junction Commons Project:

The idea is to transform the old police station on Mavety into a "community hub". The feasibility study will be ready to be presented at a town hall in March. It is estimated that \$80K will be required to simply bring the building up to code (i.e.: elevator, etc.) and \$3.5 million will be required to completely renovate the space to suit the community. Ideally, the top floor will be "rentable" to businesses, which could bring in enough revenue to cover the costs of running the facility. The hope is to get a 100-year lease and run the centre without the involvement of the city. There is a possibility of hosting the Farmers market on this property this summer. Mavety Street would be a great street to host festivals in the future.

Volunteers are needed to help with the Junction Commons. For more information, check out the website "junctioncommons.wordpress.com". You can get on the mailing list to receive updates.

Review of Minutes from January 15, 2014

Des motioned to accept the Minutes, seconded by Janice. Minutes approved.

1. "Dreaming the Junction", a list of brainstormed ideas for improving the Junction by the Junction Residents Association was provided to all members in attendance, since those ideas may also apply in the West Bend.
2. Discussed a general perception that perhaps our Councillor isn't giving enough attention to the north end of the Ward, a feeling that our concerns rank low viz a viz other Ward locations; would like to ask him to come back to further address specific topics, such as our neighbourhood parks or traffic mitigation measures and the Keele-Dundas intersection.
3. Joe suggested the skating party in Baird Park be held on Sunday, March 2nd from 2:00 to 4:00pm. Joe will confirm these times and asks that everybody tell their friends and neighbours. The WBCA will have a table and flyers at this event. Joe will look into getting refreshments donated from Tim Hortons. Des will supply a WBCA sign for the skating party.
4. Guest speaker for next month (City Emergency Manager) to be arranged by Joe.
5. Joe and Dawn will help with the updating of the WBCA website.
6. No OMB decision announced yet on 2376 Dundas St West (aka the "Elephant", north of Crossways).
7. The Chair proposed a Motion that the West Bend Community Association supports the Junction Triangle Rail Committee's request "that the Ontario provincial government include \$440-million in the 2014 budget for the electrification of the Georgetown South rail corridor from Union Station to Pearson International Airport." The Motion was seconded by Johanne and passed unanimously.

Future agenda items:

March – Disaster procedures (Emergency planner), Neighbourhood Street Sale
April – Presentation from Romero House

The next WBCA social get together is at the Magic Oven on Friday, February 28th at 7:00pm.

Moved to adjourn at 9.00pm