

The West Bend Community Association
Minutes from April 16, 2014

In attendance: Chair Des McComish, Tim Noronha, Johanne Wilkins, Joe Costa, Ruth Caspell, Barbara Gordon, Jonquil Eyre, Tom Huras, Scott Dobson, Jim Chisholm, Elka Weinstein, Ike Zimbel, Maurice Richter, Cora McCloy, Ursula McCloy, Peter Goddard, Janice LeBlanc, Gus.

Guest: David Soknacki

Welcome and introductions

Des introduced our guest, Mayoral Candidate David Soknacki

Presentation by David Soknacki

David discussed his resume and platform. Below is a synopsis of his presentation:

David was a councillor in Scarborough from 1994 to 1997 and 1999 to 2006; his background is small business with a business degree. David was the budget committee vice chair for David Miller as well as the budget chief for David Miller. Among his reasons for running are that he believes he can bring people/councillors together and that City budgets are out of control.

1. David supports the Scarborough LRT (cheaper, faster, serves more people, requires no tax increase).
2. He feels the police and emergency services budgets are not sustainable – he would carry out a Strategic Plan Review to re-evaluate these budgets, as there currently is not enough money left over for "quality of life" items in Toronto. He would also sit on the police board if elected mayor.
3. A wealth of data is available at City Hall and he would like to make it more accessible to entrepreneurs and the public. "Open Access Data" should be provided so that we can use FACTS to ensure City resources are used equitably. David suggested having a contest for students - to create apps to allow the public to access this information easily.
4. Would like to have BIAs and neighbourhoods more involved in improving their areas (e.g. adopt a park, closing streets for parties, geothermal heating, etc.)
5. Supports "Shared Streets" and recognizes that people, transit, bikes and cars need to work together.
6. Supports devolution of power to the community/citizenry. Citizen Advisory Committees might need to be brought back. We should read the City of Toronto Act to see how the community has the ability to change local rules.
7. Supports "Ranked Balloting" and Term limits for councillors, keeping in mind that term limits are a provincial decision.
8. Open to keeping the eastern portion of the Gardiner open but we need to find alternate transit options.
9. Supports better use of GO train lines for local use.
10. Supports raising development charges; perceives inertia in City planning dept.

Last month's meeting minutes were approved by Joe and seconded by Ike.

Presentation by Scott Dobson of the Friends of West Toronto Railpath community group

Scott provided an update on the Railpath expansion. The West Toronto Railpath expansion Phase#2 will run south to Queen and Dufferin, jog down Strachan, through CAMH, etc. The construction should be completed by 2016. Metrolinx are being asked to spend 10M dollars to build a bridge at Wabash to the Loblaw's parking lot. The Railpath expansion #3 will run north to St. Clair (no completion date on this expansion). Check out the website www.Railpath.ca for more information. "Grow Op" will hold walking tours of the Railpath expansion areas, from the Gladstone Hotel at the end of April.

Scott also provided some insight on the Sterling Road development, in that the original development plans were ready to go, but countered by Gord Perks.

Other items discussed:

Des and Graham have found someone to update our website for \$500-\$600. The web designer will provide a prototype using Wix. The goal is to have a new site by May 2014, with a link to Facebook.

The spending of 1 million dollars in Section 37 Funds will be discussed by the Bloor By The Park BIA at an upcoming meeting (date and location to be determined).

The existing fence at the Dorval gardens overlooking the TTC tracks will remain. The WBCA would like to see a more attractive fence installed once the TTC completes their work.

Tim Noranda discussed the Junction Commons project. They need volunteers for a Board of Directors. A timeline of next steps is on their website. He feels this hub could really service the West Bend Community.

The development at Dundas West and Keele (next to the FreshCo lot) will be going ahead; the OMB did not feel that the Avenue study was thorough enough as it failed to consider Dundas West and Bloor as a transit hub. The final height will be 23 storeys (down from 29) with better setbacks (the Crossways was not used as a precedent). A possible strategy for future developments might be to negotiate with developers and work out differences/requests rather than going to the OMB.

The Junction Streetscape plans will be presented by the Junction BIA on May 1 at 7:00pm at West Toronto Baptist Church.

The WBCA has been asked to consider supporting the creation of a Junction Heritage Conservation District. No decision has been taken, as we need more information to understand just what such a designation would mean for businesses and residents.

Romero House Fundraiser will be held at Lula Lounge. Tickets can be purchased at romerohouse.org. The next social will be held at Shox, Friday April 25 at 7:00pm (Note: this event was deferred).

Standing items:

Treasury Report - \$769 of available funds. Tim is concerned that the cost to update the website might be a stretch as money will be required for permits at the school. Tim also questioned the lasting value of a website update. Des indicated the new website will be easy to update so it remains fresh & timely.

Membership & Communication – Graham and Jillian will send the updated flyer to Johanne who will arrange its printing (500 copies) for distribution at local events and to West Bend area homes.

Future agenda items: No update at this meeting. **Move to adjourn at 9pm**