

## **Ottawa East Community Association meeting**

**July 7, 2020**

### **Zoom Meeting, 7 pm**

Attendance:

Board members: Bob Gordon (acting chair), Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay, Ron Rose, Catherine Pacella, Don Fugler, Peter Tobin, Phyllis Odenbach Sutton, Brendan O'Kelly, John Dance, Courtenay Beauregard, Jeff O'Neill

Non board members: Doug Macaulay, Linda Kristal, Eugene Haslam

Bob – Background on the food truck issue: Received an email from the office of Councillor Menard at 4pm on June 15 about the food truck program. Were asked to provide feedback by 12pm on June 17. City of Ottawa identified two criteria for the program: The park must have a sufficiently large parking lot and there should be no negative effect from an increase in competition upon local businesses, who are already struggling with loss of clientele. Board members asked councillor's office if city would be conducting consultation with neighbourhood businesses and was advised that city was not consulting. It was decided by OOECA board members that Brantwood Park did not meet the second criteria. When list of parks was sent out by the media, Brantwood Park should not have been on the list, by Friday, June 19, Brantwood was already off of the city's list. Application for food truck program was June 24, very short

Linda – Did not have this background information. We are in unusual times and the food trucks are not permanent, not serious, and could have been clawed back if a problem did arise. The community needs something fun right now. Could have done electronic canvassing.

Bob – Acknowledged that these are difficult times. Agree that positivity in the neighbourhood is welcome. The concern is that the city did not consult, gave less than 48 hours for community associations to consult, and Old Ottawa East does not have a BIA. Throughout COVID, we have heard from businesses that they were having difficulties.

Linda – Noted that two businesses on Facebook said they were in support of the food trucks.

Courtenay – Concerned that the whole board was not consulted on this issue.

Bob – Acknowledged that due to family issues (birth of child), he was not keeping up with email correspondence.

Alexandra – We have committees within the OOECA, example planning, parks and greenspace, SLOE. Frequently, stuff comes across our desks that committees make decisions without consulting the whole board. John Dance did response on Facebook to the issue out of desire to engage community in discussion. The community association was asked if Brantwood Park would meet those two criteria, not if the community would want food trucks. Key criteria: that

the food trucks should not introduce new competition to local businesses that did not exist pre-pandemic who are already struggling with loss of clientele. The decision and risk assessment was made on this criteria.

Eugene – Noted that the process for the decision was flawed.

Bob – It was a “perfect storm.” City did not give community association adequate time to consult, in addition to personal commitments that were happening at the same time.

Phyllis – Raised concern with suggestion that if a problem did arise, we could deal with it afterward. Think the opposite – don’t accept the risk. It was also unfair of the city to ask the community association to do the consultation.

Catherine – If we allowed the food trucks to go ahead and a problem did happen, we would have to ask the food trucks to leave. It would end up hurting their business. They are given a permit to operate and it is not if a permit can be revoked.

John – Regrets responding to Facebook post, thought he was doing the right thing but trying to clarify the situation and accepting responsibility. Believes the community association erred on the side of caution.

Eugene – Suggestion of NIMBYism in Old Ottawa East.

Alexandra – The criteria given the city says that the food trucks should not introduce new competition to local businesses that did not exist pre-pandemic. That is not NIMBYism.

Courtenay – Could have looked at it as not competition but as who would have come into our neighbourhood. Could have raised awareness of Old Ottawa East. Increasing competition is not necessarily a bad thing.

Alexandra – CAG is looking at rescheduling the Main Event to another time, possibly August. We can help by participating in that, have a community event that draws people in. We had to make a risk assessment based on the criteria that the city gave us, and given the criteria made the responsible choice to help our local businesses thrive into the future.

Bob – Moving forward, we will aim to do better with communication within the board. Perhaps we have a need for a business rep within the OOECA.

Courtenay – Noted that the third party information from Facebook and the newsletter raises some issues for the OOECA to explore. Perhaps we need better control over communication and the sharing of information.

Bob – Noted that the need for improved communications was raised at the June 2020 board meeting.

Phyllis – Noted that Bob has taken on the role of acting chair, can't be expected to do communications as well with a new baby too. We need people to step up in the community and volunteer. We also need to take time in the summer to recharge and relax.

Bob – We are always trying to encourage more participation in the OOECA and the community, it's an ongoing priority.

Meeting concluded.