

Ottawa East Community Association meeting

April 14, 2020

7 pm, Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay, Peter Tobin, Bob Gordon, Brendan O'Kelly, Ron Rose, Don Fugler, Suzanne Johnston, Jayson Maclean, Courtenay Beauregard, Ariela Summit, Phyllis Odenbach Sutton, Catherine Pacella, John Dance (*Tom Scott unable to attend due to technical issues)

Approval of agenda: moved by Phyllis Odenbach Sutton, seconded by Ron Rose

Minutes of March 10, 2020: suggestion to remove a question from Q&A that doesn't have an answer; include final letter from Jayson to city; moved by Don Fugler, seconded by Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay

Chair's report – Bob Gordon

- Some security concerns using Zoom, will be moving to Google Meet in the future
- Questions about farmer's market – potential for opening up
 - o Who is the rep for OOE?
 - o Ariela to address farmer's markets in councillor's report

Councillor's report – Ariela Summit

- Campaigning for open streets, looking at Bank Street around essential services, no decision yet
 - o Looking into purchasing hotels to house homeless population
- Q – have you heard from OOE residents about how people are faring?
- A – have a volunteer sign-up, great response so far, ensuring safety for those around Brewer Arena (where testing facility is operating)
- Q – what kind of volunteer work is being done?
- A – more specific to particular individuals and specific needs (ie: having supplies delivered)
- Q – reference to Ottawa.ca buy local campaign – what about OOE businesses?
- A – Most information has been submitted by BIAs, aware of work done in Glebe and OOS to highlight their local businesses
 - o John Arthorne has put together information on OOE businesses and will share with Ariela
 - o See if it can be included on city's website, shared within community
- Q – Can we have beg buttons changed on Main Street?
- A – not yet, have made request to city staff but they have said no, will keep pursuing with city staff

- Q – can we make some sidewalks one way?
- A – bigger discussion about that initiative within the city, will follow up
- Q – What was the rationale for denying removal of beg buttons?
- A – will share response with board, essentially city staff deemed it low risk and it already cycles through (*response is attached below – email from Greg Kent, acting director, Traffic Services)

Treasurer’s Report – Don Fugler

- \$23,989.97
 - o Does not reflect costs associated with LPAT appeal
 - o Approximately \$15,800 in LPAT fund

Planning: Block 2B – Ron Rose

- Reached settlement, LPAT supposed to meet on April 9 to give approval of settlement – it was postponed
- Regional – getting antsy about getting started on 2B
- Asked city about a conference call hearing
 - o LPAT doesn’t have a protocol in place for it but willing to explore it
- Supposed to take place this week – haven’t heard yet
- But even if city issues building permit, they can’t do construction
- Q – condos already started – aren’t they exempt?
- A – No permit yet so they are not deemed essential
- Q – will we still have a virtual hearing?
- A – don’t know, forms were filled out but haven’t heard from lawyer about a date
 - o But that is still the plan (ie: to have a virtual hearing)

Deschatelets building – Ron Rose

- Received note from Sally Coutts at city to demolish Chapel Wing of Deschatelets building
- Comments due by April 20 – request to push back deadline
- Some errors in the report, Sally Coutts admits it was rushed
- Concerns about diminishing of heritage character
- Community doesn’t gain anything from the proposal
 - o Links to school, gym all happen irregardless of the chapel wing
- No indication that wing is in immediate danger
- OOECA to ask for an extension for one month
 - o Request that Sally Coutts and others have a conference call to discuss the proposal
- Q – does councillor have same deadline?
- A – yes, have pushed back on it
 - o Ron to also communicate that to Sally Coutts

- 1C of Greystone Development – deadline for comments is April 16
 - o Not clear why the rush – this is non-essential
 - o Deadline was set before latest provincial tightening of restrictions on construction industry
 - o Planning committee did not meet in March because of everything happening so that necessary to get more time to comment
- R4 zoning – draft letter proposed by Alexandra about need for greenspace
- R4 zone seeks to add intensification – everything north of Queensway is R4, also Echo between Hazel and Clegg
- 3-4 units to 6-8 units without parking
- Alexandra – focus largely on visual aspects of how these buildings would look, doesn't account for neighbourhood character
 - o But now COVID 19 is highlighting the need for greenspace
- OOECA planning committee to look at draft letter – more greenspace for all in community vs. just those in the units
- Timing for comments is early May 2020

SLOE – Jayson Maclean

- Movement to deem community gardens as essential, important for food security
- Draft letter to MPP, city (*draft letter included below as part of committee reports)
- OOECA to endorse the letter, also send to premier and health minister
 - o Councillors Menard and King have sent email about this too
- Q – does this include the Children's Garden?
- A – need to get clarification on this
- Ariela – farmer's markets – local producers are concerned about profits
 - o No decision on it yet but it's being looked at

Parks and Greenspace – Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay

- Thanks to Ariela for ongoing help with Springhurst Park
- Q – can city issue less tickets for people in parks and use more of a warning?
- A – has been raised with staff

Greystone – Peter Tobin

- Retirement residence not opening
- 1A – stopped work inside on 6th floor

Membership – Suzanne Johnston

- Will need to think about membership drive in the fall
- May need to go online

New Business

- Ron Rose – ward boundaries discussion, FCA is looking at it
- Add to agenda for May meeting
- Possible impact to Capital Ward – move Heron Park into Riverside Ward?
- Need to look at possibility that new boundaries mean less representation? Does it also shift the “balance of power”?
- Suggestion for a post COVID-19 celebration similar to Main Event, recognize everyone’s efforts
- Main Street plaque to be installed in the next few weeks, will share with community once it is in place
- Bob Gordon – Regional wanted to do a full presentation at this meeting on Deschatelets – will do it online
- Courtenay Beauregard – has a contact to help with an emergency preparedness plan for the community association

Motion to adjourn – moved by Phyllis Odenbach Sutton, seconded by Brendan O’Kelly

Committee reports:

Parks and Greenspace – Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay

Mr. Tim J. Moerman
Senior Planner
Zoning, Intensification and Neighbourhoods
City of Ottawa

Dear Mr. Moerman,

R4 Zoning Review and Residential Greenspace

I am writing to express our community’s concern over the proposed changes to R4 zoning that aim to increase housing density, but that will also result in a commensurate decrease in residential greenspace. While we appreciate the need for bringing more affordable low to mid-rise housing options to the residents of Ottawa (most recently identified as “the missing middle”), the current Covid-19 virus crisis has brought a new spotlight on the need for adequate home-located greenspace. Starkly put, some of those who live in dense housing structures have found themselves effectively caged in their small dwelling units.

While we understand that the front and rear yard setbacks established through Infill 1 and Infill 2 are not proposed to change under the R4 review, the reality of the impact of proposed R4 changes would mean that each front or rear yard would be required to accommodate a greater number of people than before. In view of the opinion of most public health authorities that that the current crisis, regrettably, may well be repeated in the future, we have grave concern that those in isolation simply would not have adequate access to outdoor space should the R4 zoning changes be implemented as proposed.

We would ask therefore, that: 1. the requirement for front and back yard setbacks be increased

substantively, and/or 2. that the number of new dwelling units in R4 zones be limited to four. The Covid-19 crisis is causing us to reflect on a vast array of consequential effects and likely future changes, we ask that the need for residential greenspace be one of these.

Kind Regards,

agm

Chair, Parks and Greenspace

Old Ottawa East Community Association

FCA report – Ron Rose

The March 2020 meeting of the FCA was cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus. On-line discussion has centered around city planning, particularly the concept of the “15 minute neighbourhood. Much of the work on this concept has been led by FCA Chair, Sheila Perry, and undertaken by students at the Telfer School of Management at Ottawa U. Barhaven has been used as a laboratory for this concept, with the full backing of the local Councilor, Jan Harder, and a presentation on the concept of a 15 minute neighbourhood was made to the most recent virtual meeting of the City Planning Committee.

Other recent topics have included the possible impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on future city planning, particularly whether denser cities are more susceptible to pandemics, or whether we should be encouraging more urban expansion. This discussion is also taking place at the same time as a discussion about expansion of the Urban Boundary, i.e., whether the City should aim to encourage 70% of the population growth to occur within the existing urban boundary, and whether that can be done without expanding the urban boundary.

The topic of ward boundaries has spurred some discussion, initially within the Planning and Zoning Committee of the FCA, but the topic will more appropriately be discussed by the general membership. To date, the only discussions have been very preliminary.

A Virtual meeting of the Planning and Zoning Committee was held last week. The response to the City’s most recent reports on Infill II and on the R-4 zoning review phase II have occupied much of the Committee’s time.

Planning report – Brendan O’Kelly

The planning committee did not meet in March, however there was email discussion centering mainly on construction of building 2B. In light of the City cancelling in-person meetings, plans were made to arrange an expedited LPAT hearing to approve the negotiated settlement, which will allow the city to approve the site plan for 2B and issue a building permit. We are waiting for notice of when the hearing will take place. We may hear back within the next week.

Given the COVID-19 crisis and the new limits imposed on non-essential construction, there has been discussion about whether construction on building 2B is allowed to continue. Excavation of the 2B site, which includes pile-driving, has been ongoing. However, the planning committee has received word from Councillor Menard’s office that all work on the 2B site will stop by Monday - April 13, 2020.

The planning committee is also reviewing the proposal to demolish the North East

wing of the DesChâtelets building (including chapel) with the aim of creating a new addition to house a community centre, school, and affordable housing. Of special concern is how much assurance can be given to the community that the demolition of the chapel will indeed lead to construction of a school, etc.

The proposal will be reviewed by the Built Heritage Sub-Committee, which will meet on May 12, 2020. Deadline for commenting is April 20, 2020.

No comments on the R4 review have been discussed recently. The City's deadline to comment on the proposal is May 8, 2020.

SLOE, the environment and sustainability committee of the OOECA - Jayson MacLean

Item 1 of 1 - Letter to MPP Joel Hardin and Councillor Shawn Menard, re: Community Gardening during COVID-19

- SLOE has a letter drafted to Joel Hardin and Shawn Menard (below) and is asking for feedback from the Board before sending it.
- With regard to COVID-19 response efforts, the Ontario government has put community gardening in the group of "community amenities" that are to remain closed during the crisis, effectively deeming their use as non-essential.
- A coordinated response to this decision has been launched, prominently including efforts from Ottawa's Just Food non-profit.
- The gist of the response has been to say that food security is an aspect of the current crisis and thus community gardens should be part of Ontario's efforts on this front.
- I contacted OOEC Community Garden coordinator Margaret Vant Erve, who said she has been writing letters to various government representatives on the topic. Here's what she wanted to relate to the OOECA on the topic:
 - "We are definitely in need of better links happening between food production and the supply to the consumer. Our community gardens are a very safe way to produce healthy organic food and it is super easy to practice the safe distancing. We would work closely with Just Foods on the protocol for how to deal with shared equipment. So, yes, please, more voices are better."
- In other places, the City of Gatineau has recently supported keeping its community gardens open by calling for coordinators to work with the City to establish safety protocols and last week the BC government reversed its decision and designated community gardens essential services.

Letter Draft:

Dear Joel Hardin/Shawn Menard,

The Sustainable Living Ottawa East committee of the Old Ottawa East Community Association is asking that, with respect to the current COVID-19 crisis, you support the designation of community gardening as an essential food service.

There are a number of reasons why this is the right move. Here are a few:

- Community food production plays a role in the response worldwide to the COVID-19 pandemic

- Food supplies worldwide are taking on more uncertainty as a result of the current health and economic crisis, making local food production more critical
- Already-stressed food banks in Ottawa receive donations every year from community gardens
- Many people in Ottawa rely on community gardens for food each year
- Concerning community garden use during the COVID-19 crisis, clear protocols can be established in coordination with public health officials to maintain public safety

We hope that you will support this position and work toward removing community gardens from the Province of Ontario's current list of non-essential community amenities.

Thanks for your time,
Jayson MacLean
SLOE chair,
Old Ottawa East Community Association

Re: beg buttons

On behalf of Greg Kent, Acting Director, Traffic Services:

Mayor and Members of Council:

At the March 25 Council meeting, direction was provided to staff to “*look at the feasibility of reprogramming automated push buttons (beg buttons) where safe to do so, in order reduce the need for people to physically touch these buttons to safely cross a street*”. The purpose of this memo is to provide Council members with the outcome of the review in addition to staff's recommendation.

As part of the Transportation Services' feasibility review, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) was asked to provide their professional advice on whether operating traffic signals in a fixed time mode, which does not require people to physically press the push buttons, would be an effective means to help reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus. OPH has confirmed that this change to signal operations is not recommended. The transmission risk associated with push button use would be relatively low and would be best dealt with by practising good hand hygiene at all times.

In the City of Ottawa, approximately 80% of traffic signals are equipped with pedestrian push buttons and traffic sensors. These features enable the sequence and duration of both the vehicle and pedestrian displays to be adjusted continuously in a manner which provides the best possible level of service to all users of the intersection. Removing pedestrian push buttons and having signals cycle continuously through the pedestrian sequences would have the following impacts:

- **Increased pedestrian delay:** In the absence of opposing crossing demand, pedestrian activated signals normally rest with the 'WALK' indication for the more frequently used

crossing. Forcing the signals to cycle continuously would result in a shorter 'WALK' time for the majority of pedestrians. The total pedestrian waiting time would increase and there would likely be a greater number of pedestrians completing illegal crossings by beginning to cross during the 'DON'T WALK' indication. Furthermore, the removal of push buttons would also likely result in overall longer cycle times, further increasing the total duration of pedestrian waiting times.

- **Public complaints:** Continuous cycling of signals is anticipated to generate an increased number of complaints related to increased stopping times where no or little pedestrian crossing activity is taking place.
- **Increased vehicular delay:** Continuous cycling of signals are also likely to result in greater vehicle delays which increases idling activities. Idling negatively impacts the environment given the resulting increase in energy consumption and generation of pollutants by the vehicles. Furthermore, such delays cause disruption to transit operations.
- **Increased hazard:** Continuous cycling of signals leads to an increase of potential collisions. The long unnecessary delays, combined with the more frequent starting and stopping activities can result in poor signal observance and an increase in red-light running. These undesired, anticipated driver behaviours will increase risk to all intersection users including pedestrians.

As part of the development of the Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP) which was presented and approved by Council in December 2019, staff were directed to review and respond to a recommendation “to develop criteria to eliminate “beg buttons” so that pedestrians and vehicles are treated the same at actuated intersections.” In response to the recommendation, and as part of the plan, staff are looking to develop a new mode of traffic signal operation where pedestrian walk displays would automatically be activated when a vehicle is detected at a signalized intersection. Transportation Services staff are currently developing the new signal mode and reviewing the feasibility of implementing it as part of the overall traffic signal control system. Should the implementation of the new mode be deemed appropriate and feasible once developed later this year, staff will review all signals and implement where appropriate. Despite the new mode, the push button would still need to be pressed to activate accessible signal features where present and/or if a pedestrian wished to activate the crossing when no vehicle is present.

Given Ottawa Public Health’s recommendations, the impacts identified above related to implementing fixed signal timing and the ongoing signal system review and developments, staff do not recommend reprogramming traffic signals to remove the need to press a push button to activate a pedestrian crossing. Furthermore, given the COVID-19 Pandemic and our existing limited staff resources, our current focus remains on emergency response, the delivery of essential services in addition to performing legislated maintenance activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Greg Kent, Acting Director
Traffic Services
613-580-2424 ext 21707
Greg.Kent@ottawa.ca

Copy of letter sent re: community gardens

Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
Province of Ontario

Subject: Community Gardens in Ontario during COVID-19

Dear Minister Elliott,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Old Ottawa East Community Association in Ottawa to ask that you reconsider the designation of community gardens in the province of Ontario as 'community amenities' that are to remain closed during the COVID-19 crisis.

There are a number of reasons why community gardens should be opened this year, with food security being, to our minds, a central and overarching context. Many people in Ottawa rely on community gardens for food each year and food banks in Ottawa often receive donations from community gardeners. More broadly, as the security of food supplies has taken on a new level of uncertainty during the current crisis both at home and abroad, it only makes sense to allow Ontarians to grow their own food where possible.

Please reconsider this decision.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Jayson MacLean
Chair, Sustainable Living Ottawa East Committee
Old Ottawa East Community Association
Old Town Hall
61 Main Street
Ottawa, ON K1S 1B3

CC: Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Joel Harden, MPP
Catherine McKenna, MP
Shawn Menard, Cllr