

## Chair's Report – December 2013

1. **AGM:** The AGM was attended by almost 100 people. Suggestions for improvements next year are to limit presenters' time so that more time is allowed for Q&As; finding a new venue so that we can have better refreshments/reception (the consensus is that we didn't get value for the \$400 of catering); have a graphic for the financials (although it was much appreciated that the financial report had been posted on the website beforehand) ... if there are any other suggestions let me know and I'll meet CAG to discuss.
2. **Animating the Canal:** Both Stephen Pope and I spoke with Queen's students who are conducting a study to propose options on how the canal in the Ottawa urban area could be "animated." I said that OOE has a strong interest in having the canal as a more active place and at the moment it's a primarily a lovely, scenic stretch, good for cycling and walking and skating in the winter. I also mentioned that I thought the Corktown footbridge had really contributed to making the canal more active and that the Clegg-Fifth footbridge has the potential to do the same in our area.
3. **AVTC / TMP:** The transportation master plan was unanimously approved by city council. However, during the council discussion (not at the committee level) Councillor Diane Deans made her pitch for completion of the AVTC. As per the approved TMP, the AVTC shouldn't be built for at least another 18 years, given that it's not on the "affordable roads" list. That said, given the fact that the TMP will be revisited every five years, councilors may try to again get AVTC back onto the "affordable roads" list. Our continuing challenge will be to demonstrate that the AVTC roadway makes less and less sense and to get the AVTC lands (166 Lees) better used (expansion of Springhurst Park and creation of a playing field?)
4. **CIIP 2013 & 2014:** OOE's cash in lieu of parkland projects for 2013 (see attachment) remain unassessed and unfulfilled with the exception of the funding to cover the Springhurst Park play structure cost overrun. I've asked if Councillor Chernushenko would give an update on what's happening with the other items. Also, he asked for what we'd like to have funded in the new year. I've shared this question with our partners (CAG, SLOE, SHCHC). An initial thought is \$50 – 100,000 (guestimate) could be used for the expansion of Springhurst and/or the creation of a playing field at 166 Lees.
5. **Closure of Southern End of Elgin (by Canada Trust-TD Bank):** This work is actually underway, something that is bound to save a few pedestrian lives. The bulk of the work won't be completed until next spring but the temporary closure will take effect shortly.
6. **Conflict of Interest of Board Members:** I noticed that Action Sandy Hill (their community association) had an issue where one of the board members had a financial interest in a planning proposal for the community. I'd think that if any of us had such an interest in any community proposal we'd recluse ourselves from the discussion!
7. **New and Former Board Members:** It's great how we've been renewed with Caroline Hyslop, Suzanne Johnston, Phyllis Odenbach Sutton and Christine Loth-Bown joining the board. What does the Board think of giving, say, \$25 Green Door/Singing Pebbles/Three Trees gift certificates to each of the board members who resigned?

8. **Shared Facilities with SPU:** SPU may have an interest in a joint university-community development of shared indoor recreational facilities. This very tentative idea seems worth exploring from the standpoint of CAG and SHCHC.
9. **Rideau River Western Pathway:** The joint OOECA/SLOE position, as per email distribution and discussion, is attached.
10. **Attendance at Monthly Meetings:** When the constitutional amendments were approved at the AGM, 2012 there were concerns of a number of people that allowing only board members to vote at board meetings would discourage attendance at the monthly meetings. According to the stats that Jill Wherret prepared, attendance did not decline after the new voting restriction was implemented, although we did lose one very dedicated association member as a result of the change.
11. **TOD – Lees LRT Station:** On December 10 the city's Planning Committee will be considering recommendations for the transit-oriented development at Lees. I'm suggesting, as per our earlier submission, we should be speaking to this. (as of Dec 2 I haven't read the proposals but my scan suggests the problems that were there before remain ...)

12.

**New Year Goals:** Perhaps in the next few days after the board meeting all board members could email Jaime and myself with the three or four issues they'd like to see pursued / resolved in 2014. If they could highlight the issues that they personally would like to participate on that would be great. We'll consolidate the list and bring it forward at the January meeting. Issues raised at the AGM were:

- Main Street renewal
- Coping with construction (Main, 417, LRT, institutional lands, ...)
- Sale and development of institutional lands – community response
- Active transportation connectivity – footbridge and nature trail
- Excessive / inappropriate intensification
- Making Isabella-Elgin-Pretoria safe
- Lees Transit Oriented Development
- Inadequate services, facilities and amenities
- Greater participation / more representation
- Lansdowne Park opening

13. **Sale of Oblate Lands:** Walton-Monarch, the firm with the accepted conditional offer for the Oblate lands, has not approached the community association to provide any information or seek our views. I've asked if Councillor Chernushenko would let them know that we are vitally interested in the development of the Oblate lands.

## Cash in Lieu of Parkland - Update / Proposals (June 30, 2013)

### OOE CiLP Proposals for 2013

**Approved by CAG, OOECA and SHCHC (OOECA Meeting May 14, 2013)**

**1. Springhurst Park Rejuvenation - Funding shortfall (\$18,000).** The cost of the major upgrade of Springhurst Park will cost \$28,000 more than originally estimated by the city. Sandy Hill Community Health Centre and CAG have been leading - and largely funding - this large project but now \$28,000 is needed on an urgent basis so that the plan as originally conceived can be expedited. SHCHC is will to contribute a further \$10,000 to reduce the outstanding requirement to \$18,000 should the community wish to endorse the \$18,000 as a priority for 2013 CiLP funding.

### **Pending**

**2. Notice Board at 166 Lees\_**(Approx cost \$4,500)

**3. Dock at Springhurst like the one at Brantwood:** The previous request for a dock at Springhurst was rejected by the city because, they said, there are other nearby docks. Paddlers in the Lees/Springhurst area disagree with this assessment. (Approx cost \$25,000 - \$50,000)

**4. Outdoor concrete ping pong table** at Brantwood. If the table is a success at Brantwood a second table would be subsequently sought for Springhurst Park. (Approx \$5K plus installation).

**5. "Bank" money for Ballantyne Park Revitalization**

**6. "Bank" money for Springhurst Park Field House /** and/or Stage 2 of revitalization. This would serve the Lees apartments and the Springhurst area residents much as the Brantwood field house serves the southern part of the community.

**7. Analysis of soil at lot north of Old Town Hall.** Councillor Chernushenko has told OOECA that City staff are not prepared to consider the purchase of the empty lot to the north of OTH until it knows the degree of contamination of the soil there and how much it would cost to remediate. The Councillor has said that the funding of such analysis could come from CiLP funding. (BTW, it's worth noting the city received \$120,000 from the sale of its surplus OOE lands Redmond Place road allowance.)

December 1, 2013

Robin Bennett  
Cycling Facilities Coordinator  
City of Ottawa

## **Rideau River Western Pathway – Position on City’s Proposal**

Dear Mr. Bennett:

This letter is in response to the city’s proposed functional design of the Rideau River Western Pathway through Old Ottawa East and is a follow-up to our earlier letter of July 3, 2013 (attached).

A number of the recommendations of the community association and SLOE have been reflected in the city’s plan – most notably the separation of the paved route for fast cyclists and the “soft” route for others between Belmont and the southern end of Brantwood Park. Similarly, the proposed creation of ramps at both ends of Brantwood Park and on the northern side of the Transitway-LRT bridge will be improvements greatly enhancing accessibility for users. These proposals are much appreciated although we advise that the ramp at the southern end of Brantwood Park should be carefully located and constructed so that the roots of two massive century-old oak trees are not disturbed.

However, the fundamental OOECA/SLOE recommendation that the pathway be soft-surfaced (stone dust) – especially through Brantwood Park – has been rejected by the city because of its argument that the pathway work is primarily being proposed so that there is a commuting route for cyclists and so that accessibility is assured for all non-motorized users, including those using wheelchairs.

We strongly argue that all portions of the pathway running through Old Ottawa East – except for in the Oblate lands and on the University of Ottawa property - should be soft-surfaced. In terms of accessibility, members of OOECA who use wheelchairs have no problem with the soft-surfaced portion of the already-built pathway through Springhurst Park. Further, we have found nothing in our research to support the argument that a paved surface is needed to meet either the Province’s or the City’s accessibility requirements. It’s also worth noting that the modest width of the stone-dust pathway through the Springhurst Park portion of the pathway has been most satisfactory for users so that we recommend that the proposed 3 metre width with a 1.5 metre “shoulder” on both sides be scaled back.

Our fundamental argument for having a soft-surfaced pathway is that priority must be given to protecting the delicate and precious riverine ecology, something that will not happen if there is a hard-surfaced route. The city’s consultants’ position that at-risk snapping turtles will be deterred or detoured from a hard-surfaced pathway is utterly at odds with the need to enhance the turtles’ environment. As a society and a far-sighted city we need to recognize that what may be best for certain classes (often motorists but road bikes and in-line skaters in this case) is not justification for profoundly altering the natural environment, particularly a rare piece of it in the centre of the city.

A second key argument for a soft-surfaced pathway is that it will slow down cyclists, something particularly important in Brantwood Park where the proposed pathway passes very near several play structures. We do not want a situation whereby a playing child gets struck by a speeding cyclist. It's also worth noting that proposed multi-use pathway is labelled by city plans as a "community route" between Belmont and Clegg and as a "city wide route" between Clegg and the University of Ottawa campus.

Also, as per this past weekend's discussion on the development of the Chaudière Falls area, the "contemplative" value of the OOE stretch of shoreline is very important and will be diminished if the pathway is a hard surface. Research is increasingly showing how important such spaces are to users' mental and physical health.

The city's proposed plans call for two lengthy sections of boardwalk where fast cyclists have the option of using parallel roadways. While this appears to be an innovative proposition enhancing the unique natural features between Belmont and Brantwood Drive, we suggest that the same effect could be achieved in a much less expensive fashion if stone dust was used. The stone dust approach is, as per the above, more friendly to the environment and, in our experience at Springhurst Park and as has been seen at Windsor Park, remarkably durable without requiring costly maintenance.

The proposal to pull back the path from the edge of the Oblate property is a good idea, as Mary Trudeau previously wrote. Similarly, as she said, the path should be pulled back from the shoreline at the location between the Oblate lands and Springhurst Park. The current alignment is only in place because of the fence delineating the Oblate land property line. One other specific change is that we are of the view that the connection from Onslow to the pathway running through Brantwood Park is not necessary especially if it is hard-surfaced but, if it really must be built, it should be on the north side, rather than the south side, of the fieldhouse so that conflicts with fieldhouse users are minimized

Finally, in appreciation of the constrained financial capacity of the City, we suggest that the improved pathway be implemented in phases as outlined in our previous correspondence.

Again, thank you for showing such initiative with this project but let's be very careful that the natural environment is not sacrificed for the sake of speeding cyclists and a few others.

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Mayor Watson  
Lynda Hancock, Chair OOSCA  
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority  
Christopher Gordon, Stantec  
Laura Mueller, Ottawa East News

Attach.

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