



The Voice of our Community

DPRG Newsletter December 2020

Dear Members,

Season's Greetings from the DPRG Board and our families to you and your families. We hope everyone is keeping warm and cozy as the temperature drops and the nights grow longer. I am noticing more seasonal lights in the area, and it seems many are putting up those lights earlier than in most years. Thanks to everyone making the evenings sparkle!

The DPRG Board has been very busy on your behalf – the articles below will give you a flavour of our progress on making development more in keeping with our area, ravine protection, improving street safety and working to reduce the noise and pollution from gas-powered leaf blowers, in addition to 'chipping away' at the sidewalk clearing initiative.

We are truly fortunate to have so many dedicated Board members, who are in turn supported by many members on our committees. We have welcomed 3 new Board members to fill vacancies – and are always keen to hear from members who would like to become more involved.

We are also very fortunate to have Councillor Josh Matlow working so hard in collaboration with the DPRG to achieve our community goals, and wish him the best of the season.

SAVE THE DATE – We are working with Councillor Matlow on a virtual Townhall tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2020. We missed our regular time with him when we had to convert our AGM to a virtual event at the last minute. Watch your emails for details!

Be well and we'll be back to you in 2021,

Cynthia Crysler

Cynthia Crysler
President, DPRG

CLEARING THE PATH TO SNOW REMOVAL

Councillor Josh Matlow has been relentless in his pursuit of expanded snow clearing for Toronto's older neighbourhoods, overcoming initial resistance from numerous Councillors. ***The DPRG now congratulates him on finally achieving success in having his latest motion approved by a 24-1 vote by Toronto City Council.***

Effectively immediately, this would expand the existing pilot project introduced last winter that is testing new snow-clearing machinery – mini-plows better capable of handling downtown and area streets. The motion also provides a path forward to full harmonization of sidewalk and ice removal in 2021-2. ***City staff have confirmed that a number of streets in Deer Park will be included in the pilot, and cleared this winter.***

Councillor Matlow relayed his thanks to almost 4,000 people who signed his petition to support the motion, and in particular *"I want to thank the Board of the Deer Park Residents Group for working with my office on this initiative and continuing to advocate for safe and accessible sidewalk clearing"*

MIDTOWN RAVINE GROUP

A consortium of eight residents' associations held its first Annual General Meeting on November 29 to approve the constitution and elect officers. Councillor Layton and Senior Constituency advisor Angela Surdi were in attendance. This group will continue to work with the City to address the health of the Midtown Ravines and what can be done to make improvements. Mike Layton expressed concern about the lack of consultation prior to the November 4th report from Metrolinx about the GO Expansion Program, Don Valley Layover Station which would be in the ravine just north of the Bloor St. Viaduct.

The MRG endorsed a letter to Mayor John Tory and City Executive Committee in support of Councillor Pasternak's request to review the Draft Stewardship Manual prepared by students in the U of T Forestry Program and Toronto Ravines Revitalization Sciences. The draft Manual provides an excellent model for the City of Toronto which will, it is hoped lead to an effective City program for involving citizens in Stewardship initiatives. This proceeded to City Council where it was approved, with amendments instructing City staff to report back on its implementation.

The MRG has also raised concerns about recent legislation which has made fundamental changes to the Conservation Authority Act. Conservation authorities bring local watershed science to the planning table. The passage of this bill gives the Minister authority to issue permits without taking into account the recommendations of the Conservation Authority.



AVENUE ROAD COALITION

The Deer Park Residents Group has joined other residents' associations and the nearby schools along Avenue Road between Davenport and St. Clair in order to make this dangerous part of Avenue Road safer for pedestrians and cyclists. In September, the DPRG participated in the Coalition's ***Safety Awareness Day***, designed to create awareness of the need for safety improvements and wider sidewalks. (You can still see the members signs along Avenue Road!)

You can browse *Avenue Road Coalition* for more information about this group and its objectives.

Reinventing the Avenue

The Avenue Road Coalition has submitted a proposal which is the latest stage in an ongoing initiative to transform Avenue Road from Bloor Street to St. Clair. Among its objectives is a return of balance between the car and pedestrian space.

The Coalition believes that the Avenue lacks any of the qualities of an urban road, instead resembling a highway running through the centre of the neighbourhood, and that the focus on high speed has compromised pedestrian safety and public space. *Reinventing the Avenue* offers concepts for expanding the public realm on Avenue Road. To learn more visit:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/152bn196ddrb1k/Avenue%20Road%20Package%2017%2011%202020.pdf?dl=0>

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We are gratified by the response to our recent membership renewal reminder, and are pleased to extend the offer. If you haven't already renewed your DPRG membership for 2020 do so now and enjoy your 2021 membership absolutely FREE! You can do so by

- ▶ Sending a cheque for \$20 payable to Deer Park Residents Group,
c/o Diana Midwinter, 1 Balmoral Avenue, Suite 521, Toronto, Ontario M4V 3B9 **or**
- ▶ Contacting treasurer@deerparkresidents.ca

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

City approves two Retirement Home and Assisted Living projects

The Amica Retirement Home and Assisted Living application at 145-155 Balmoral Avenue and the Welltower/Sunrise Assisted Living application at 1365 Yonge Street were approved at the December 2 meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council.

Many objections were raised at the first public meetings on both these applications, but neighbourhood working groups, established by Council Matlow, helped significantly revise both proposals so they were supported by the working committee and at Councillor's November virtual consultation meeting. At the Community Council meeting, two neighbours listed the same concerns as in the raised at the original public meeting.

Both Planning reports as well as Councillor Matlow's further motions were approved at the Community Council meeting that add further working group requests agreed to by the applicants. Requirements were added for construction management plans and community liaison committees as well as for further consultation as part of the City's in the site plan approval process regarding details of the developments. For the Amica project, there will be further consultation regarding building and landscape details especially where abutting neighbours properties, and for the Welltower/Sunrise project, regarding changes to the detailed design of the Yonge Street façade of the institutional building to better fits into the mixed use character of Yonge Street.

For further information, see the Planning reports:

Amica - <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-158514.pdf>

Welltower - <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-158492.pdf>

Waiting for major changes to the Wittington proposal

The major redevelopment of the block bounded by Yonge, Heath, Alvin and St. Clair, excluding the two existing St. Clair office buildings, will have a great impact on our community. The public meeting on the application raised many issues and Councillor Matlow's working committee has been meeting with the applicant but with little progress on resolving the many issues - height and density, built form, servicing, open space/public realm. The addition of traffic lights at St. Clair and Alvin and at Yonge and Delisle have been raised as well as the realignment of Heath at Yonge, accompanied by parkettes. Hopefully, a new Deer library will be included in the project.

See www.stclairplace.ca for the latest Wittington proposal.

LEAF BLOWERS ARE HEALTH HAZARDS



Dr. Sheela Basrur, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health between 1998-2004, was so concerned about the pollution caused by leaf blowers that in 2001 she recommended banning them. Toronto Council did not agree, and did not pass her recommendation.

Next year City Council will vote on a motion to ban 2-stroke leaf blowers, and the Deer Park Residents Group will support that motion because these machines produce pollution and noise both at an alarming level.

We have already received tremendous feedback from DPRG members and other area residents, and hope you will continue your support of our position.

Pollution

A gas-powered leaf blower uses a two-stroke engine which produces toxic aerosol that affects breathing. Studies show that 2-stroke leaf blower engines create more pollution per minute than cars and trucks: indeed 300 times the amount of pollutants than a pick-up truck. Furthermore, leaf blowers stir up ultra-fine particles from the ground – microscopic pollutants which are known to contribute to lung cancer, heart disease, strokes, and many respiratory illnesses.

Noise

The average leaf blower generates 100-110 decibels. Noise at that level has been demonstrated to cause hearing loss, hypertension, and can even negatively impact a child's cognitive development. Complaints about leaf blower noise are so widespread that over 400 cities in the U.S. currently either ban or regulate their use. In California alone, gas-powered leaf blowers are no longer welcome in 80 cities. The DPRG has received many emails complaining about the noise this fall.

As the world wrestles with the health and economic impacts of Covid-19, it is more important than ever to take care of the respiratory health of your family and yourself. We hope you will join us in urging Toronto City Council to ban 2-stroke gas-powered leaf blowers. We will shortly send details on how you can help.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Mt. Pleasant Road Hydro Mudslide

Restoration/repair caused by the mudslide below the Mt. Pleasant Water/Hydro facility is complete. The site is being prepared for significant plantings for erosion control.

Summerhill Gardens Emergency Channel

A project to redirect/reinforce a large section of the Yellow Creed and surrounding area was completed earlier this year. This included substantial native plantings to help with Naturalization and erosion control.

One area of the creek bank will need to be rebuilt following further study in order to create a more robust bank to withstand storm surges.



Storm Sewer Outflow Rebuild

Last month major construction in the ravine addressed a sewage outflow near the South-east corner of the St. Clair bridge. This work is scheduled for completion in May 2021.

AIR CANADA ACTS AGAINST NOISY A320's

Since 2016 the DPRG has urged Air Canada to modify their A320 series aircraft in order to reduce the screaming noises they emit. Mayor John Tory and Marc Garneau, Minister of Transportation, have supported our efforts over the years.

In 2018 Air Canada started a retrofit program, equipping the A320 aircraft with a noise reducing device, the Vortex generator. DPRG has now received the welcome news that of their 70 A320 aircraft 59 have already been retrofitted with this system, and the remaining 11 will be retrofitted by the end of 2021.

Another successful initiative undertaken by the DPRG!





Never before has there been such a pressing need to support our local retailers, currently struggling to survive under severe Covid-19 restrictions.

The **WINDOWS OF GLAM** is a seasonal event in the Yonge/St. Clair neighborhood which is designed to draw attention to these businesses.

Check out the holiday window displays at participating storefront locations and complete all 13 scavenger hunt questions by January 2 to be entered for a chance to win \$500 in weekly prizes, plus a chance to win the final grand prize draw of a \$100 Yonge/St. Clair gift card.

To enter, please visit <https://yongest.clair.ca/WinGlam2020/> to see where you can download or pick up your copy of the scavenger hunt map at participating locations.

The DPRG Newsletter is looking for technical support in the areas of graphics and layout. We need skills in Adobe Suite design software, specifically Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign. As is the case with all who contribute their time and expertise to the Deer Park Residents Group, this would be on a voluntary basis!

The Newsletter will be published every other month in 2021, starting with February, and we'll be happy to provide any other information you need. If you are interested in helping us please provide details of expertise, together with telephone number and e-mail address to: info@deerparkresidents.ca

HELP WANTED!

