

# DPRG NEWS

THE VOICE OF OUR COMMUNITY 🌿



## MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

**Your source for the latest news and updates about our neighbourhood.**

## NOTICE

**Deer Park Residents Group AGM**

**June 12 at 7pm**

**Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle**

**Guest Speaker, our Councillor Josh Matlow**

Plan to attend and bring your neighbours!

- Hear about your Board's work to help keep our Deer Park a great place to live – improving developments, managing traffic, working with tenants, repairing the Vale of Avoca Ravine and more.
- Learn about the results of the 2024 Deer Park survey.
- Vote on the 2023 DPRG Financial Report and elect your 2024 Board.
- Ask your questions and share your ideas.

Any questions? Contact us at [info@deerparkresidents.com](mailto:info@deerparkresidents.com).

***Working together for a better Deer Park in changing times.***

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your Board looks forward to sharing our work over the last year at our upcoming AGM. The last Newsletter outlined the changes coming to our neighbourhood with increasing numbers of tall buildings, increasing density and disruption as construction gets underway. We continue to work on ways to help ensure that new developments will enhance Deer Park.

We are also working with adjacent Residents' Associations to recommend actions the City must undertake to repair our ravine, an increasingly important asset for our growing community. Improving street safety is an ongoing priority. We also recognise that Deer Park is home to many tenants, more than homeowners, and recently held our first Tenants Advisory Committee meeting of the 2023-24 year.

We look forward to your responses to our upcoming 2024 Survey which will guide ongoing priorities and to meeting with you at our AGM to hear your comments and suggestions as to how the Board can help address your priorities.

Cathie Macdonald, President

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

### **The Yonge/St. Clair neighbourhood and its changing face**

Our comments in the March Newsletter focused on the number of high towers in various stages of approval in the Yonge St. Clair intersection area and the need for new planning considerations, such as excessive wind and the need for more comfortable open space areas in the new developments.

Given that we can no longer participate in working groups due to the very short time allowed by the Province for processing applications, Board representatives participate in the public consultations on development applications to try to improve them. The approval of the application to increase the project at 1365 -75 Yonge was revised to better address wind impacts. We also are represented with other residents groups in the current mediation process for 49 Jackes, which so far has reduced the proposed tower from 29 storeys to 19 and made a number of other improvements to both the David Balfour Park side and the Jackes frontage to reduce wind impacts.

Representatives of your Board also met recently with City Planning staff for an overview of the current planning process and to explore ways to develop better ways to address new issues with tall buildings, particularly wind studies, and we are now exploring ways to do that. We are also working with the BIA on improving the Yonge St. Clair intersection area.

Several years ago, in conjunction with the development application for the Wittington site (the block bounded by Yonge, Heath, Alvin and St. Clair except for the office buildings on St. Clair), the City approved a traffic study that would help plan for the new developments in the intersection area. This study should now be undertaken, with the south boundary extended to the tracks at Summerhill.

Heads up – the Parking Authority Garage between Peasant Boulevard and Rosehill Avenue is to be a development site that can include affordable housing. As this is a City project, residents will be consulted. Where current users will park is very much a question.

## TRAFFIC SAFETY

Your Board has been a member of the Avenue Road Safety Coalition and many of you participated in the public consultations last year. Many of you will have encountered the Amica construction barrier at Balmoral and the two-lane reduction there. Hopefully when the northbound lane realignment is fixed to be safer, traffic will be smoother.

Your Board will be represented along with the South Hill Homeowners Association, Brown School and the Avenue Road Safety Coalition in the upcoming meeting Councillor Matlow to discuss the proposals. The City report on improving safety on Avenue Road is anticipated before the summer break.

## RAVINES AND PARKS

### **If it's Green, it's Good, Right?**

#### **Invasive Species and our Local Ecosystem**

Spring is now upon us, and our thoughts have turned to gardening and outdoor activities. A misconception we can have as we walk through our parks and ravines is that **'If it's green, it's good'**. However, this is often not the case. Our City's

biodiversity is at risk from a range of invasive species which crowd out local flora and have a knock-on effect to wildlife.

Both The Vale of Avoca/Yellow Creek area and David Balfour Park are homes to some of the most intractable invasive species. The Vale is particularly afflicted with Garlic Mustard and Japanese Knotweed as well as Buckthorn, Black Locust, Wild Parsnip, and a creeping incidence of Dog Strangling Vine.

Norway maples are also an issue. It's a tree which can grow up to 40-60 ft in height and which has been popular because of its hardiness for street and lawn planting but is a prolific seed producer and those seeds helicopter their way (as maple seeds do) into our ravines and forests. They have a very shallow root system and produce a great deal of shade which makes it difficult for grass and other plants to grow beneath their dense canopies. Their abundance in our natural areas causes forest decline as they inhibit the regeneration of sugar maples and other native seedlings. Birds and insects are directly impacted as Norway Maples do not support any local insects or other species. Ecologically speaking, they are "sterile" – a green desert.

You may even see some of these invaders present in your own yards or properties. Bringing a heightened consciousness to what we plant in our own gardens matters as well. Many of our garden centres stock invasive species. It can be a complicated matter to sort out given conflicting jurisdictions, but the Ontario Invasive Plant Council ([ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://ontarioinvasiveplants.ca)) publishes a Grow Me Instead Guide which can be downloaded and a useful tool.

**Don't Mess With The Don** and the **Toronto Nature Stewards (TNS)** are two groups that are tackling invasive species and restoring native species (and doing clean-ups!) in sites throughout Toronto. Give them a follow on Instagram or head to their websites for more detail on their activities. We will be applying to set up a TNS group in Deer Park in 2025. Watch this space. A great app to use for identifying plants is iNaturalist which is a free download as well.

#### **Sources:**

Tree Canada ([treecanada.ca](http://treecanada.ca))

Invasive Species Centre ([invasivespeciescentre.ca](http://invasivespeciescentre.ca))



### **Ravine Clean 2024!**

Enormous thanks to all who came out to participate in the two-weekend extravaganza of garbage collection in the Vale, including the two local Councillors! Despite not very congenial weather, we had one of our best turnouts yet. Salute to local hero Rob Spindler of the Moore Park Residents Group who has been organizing this for 11 years now.

Mary Renaud, Chair Ravine Committee

## **HERITAGE**





What on earth is a 25-foot bronze and steel man doing in front of 101 St. Clair Avenue West? Besides holding a condominium tower and balancing on a pedestal of coloured cubes, that is. Well, to answer the question, internationally renowned German artist, Stephan Balkenhol was commissioned to create a work of art by Toronto's Percent for Public Art program whose goal is to improve the quality of the public realm. The program takes advantage of the former Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act: in return for funding a publicly accessible work of art, developers may receive Official Plan amendments and re-zonings equal to one percent of the cost of their development.

Working with Camrost Felcorp Inc., the developer of One O One St. Clair West, the Percent for Public Art selection committee sought an artwork which would make the space in front of the condo building more attractive and interesting. They invited six artists to submit proposals and then chose Balkenhol's concept because, as they explained, it captured "the present moment in the city's evolution and invites deep contemplation."

Balkenhol once said "Figurative sculpture is often misused as a bearer of messages....In my vision my sculptures become a question, a mirror. And it is the viewer who fills it with meaning." A distinguishing mark of his work is the figure of a standing man in slacks and shirt. In the Toronto setting, the figure addresses condo development as disruptive of city life - a man holding a condo tower can be seen as representing that creative - destructive force. This overwhelmingly tall human figure, clearly a developer, invites people who view it to invent a story about the work.

The statue's rough-hewn surface is part of Balkenhol's technique, a carving style with medieval origins. He carves the figure by hand out of a single block of wood, without using mechanical tools. Then he casts the figure in metal and adds paint for a contemporary update to this tradition. Condo Man is an outstanding addition to Deer Park's array of public art.

Lynne Kurylo, Deer Park Residents Group member

## SOURCES

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/percent-for-public-art-inventory/>  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/snuffy/48566680427>  
<https://www.strollto.com/stroll/Yonge-st-clair/>

## TENANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On May 29, 15 Tenants from 13 buildings around the Deer Park area met to learn and speak about concerns in the neighborhood and to share stories about recent events affecting rents and success stories of tenant advocacy groups in leveling the playing fields for renters. John Plumadore, a former President of the Deer Park Residents Group, provided information and answered questions about tenant resources available, tenant rights and getting help from the city when required. Top areas of interest were:

- Demolition Appeals (There are options many are not aware of for appeal);
- The list of Advocacy Groups (Acorn, Rent Safe, FMCA were top listed) and the idea of having resources in a central online reference, such as on the Deer Park Residents Group web site;
- Assistance available for Tenants groups;
- News of applications for Above Guidelines Increases;
- Transparency of building ownership;
- Joint efforts through partnerships with multiple tenant groups; and,
- A news resource for success stories of tenant groups.

Some in attendance were interested in promoting awareness of the DPRG and took fliers to distribute. There was a desire for more frequent meetings of this kind as well as a proposal to organize tenant meetings on a monthly meeting basis. Watch this space.

Jonah Libster, Chair Tenant Advisory Committee

## AND IN OTHER NEWS

### Yonge + St Clair BIA Music + Dine series

Don't miss the Yonge + St Clair BIA-organized Music + Dine series. Most Thursdays through June 6. A nice enhancement to our local dining scene.

**2024**

Thursdays  
May - June  
5:30pm - 7:30pm

# Music + Dine Series

5 Dining Locations  
5 Musical Duos  
at Yonge + St. Clair

To see full lineup  
and find a table, visit:  
[yongestclair.ca/music-dine](https://yongestclair.ca/music-dine)



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