



GOVERNOR'S BRIDGE RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

NEIGHBOURHOOD UPDATE

September 2015

GBRA Board 2015-16

Alan McFarland – Chair

Chris Fraser

Jeff Hanemaayer – Secretary-Treasurer

Kathryn Langley Hope

Keith Nash

Ian Still

The GBRA Board and volunteers have been working hard on many important matters on your behalf. But with our busy day-to-day lives, we admit we haven't done a good job communicating with you. You can read about our efforts in this rather lengthy newsletter. Future newsletters will be shorter and more frequent.

EVENTS

Community Picnic

On September 27 from 4pm to 8pm, please join us for the 48th Annual Governors Bridge Community Picnic in Nesbitt Park sponsored by the GBRA. Enjoy great food, games and races for the kids, raffle, balloons, face painting, music, fire truck and police car, and good conversations - a great time for all ages! Past raffle items have included tickets to sporting events (Go Jays Go), wine, food baskets, books and gift cards. If you'd like to donate something special to the Community Picnic, please drop off your raffle item at the home of Julie Flynn-Still (jflynn@torontopubliclibrary.ca) at 42 Nesbitt by September 26.

Federal Election University-Rosedale Candidates Debate

You are invited to attend this debate organized by Master of Global Affairs students at the University of Toronto, hosted jointly by the Munk School of Global Affairs and the Canada International Council-Toronto branch. The debate will be held on October 5 at 7:00pm at 1 Devonshire Place. To register, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/university-rosedale-all-candidates-debate-on-global-affairs-registration-18522088064>

Annual General Meeting

The GBRA had its best attendance ever (about 35 people) at its last AGM on April 15.

PUBLIC SPACES

Chorley Park Trail Design Working Group

Two GBRA members are part of a larger working group trying to find solutions to the myriad of conflicting requirements and opinions on the design of the new trail down to the Brick Works. Many residents want a fairly narrow, short and steep, natural-surface trail that has minimal impact on the environment. Others want a wider, longer and less steep trail that is accessible by families with strollers, people walking bikes, and others who are not able-bodied enough to walk a steep narrow natural-surface trail (but not necessarily in wheelchairs).

After two working group meetings in late 2014, the City concluded that the trail needs to be consistent with "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act" (AODA). This is the first time a trail construction has had to meet the requirements of the act. The City decided that it needed to solicit input from groups with points of view on disabilities beyond the one member with a disability in the Working Group.

Thirty-two people from other various groups were involved in a separate meeting in early 2015 concluded that:

- Must have wheelchair accessibility from the Douglas Drive sidewalk to the top of the trail.
- Slope of trail must be as gradual the site allows.

The City revised the trail design to meet AODA along with a number of other revisions to try to appease the local residents:

- Reduced the number, length, height and visibility of retaining walls;
- Reduced the trail width to 2.2 m;
- Included a second shorter natural-surface trail for able-bodied users;
- Put in optional sets of stairs as short-cuts;
- Created a wheelchair accessible connection between the top of the trail and the sidewalk;

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PUBLIC SPACES continued...

- Improved storm water management at the base of the trail where it meets the Belt Line which decreases the length of the trail and number of switchbacks from 5 to 4 while maintaining the minimum average slope for the site of 6.1%.

The revised design was reviewed at the final working group meeting on September 9. Some participants generally supported the revised design, others still opposed it. Participants provided written feedback on the design in general and the design specifics that will be summarized and presented to City Council who will make the final decision on the trail design.

Funds that were allocated for construction in 2014 are gone. No funds are allocated at this time. City staff is working to get the project funded again.

Post Hydro One Midtown Project: Development

From the beginning Hydro One agreed to remediate the property adjacent to Bennington Heights School, Bayview Avenue and the rail corridor. Although these lands are outside of Governors Bridge neighbourhood, our kids walk through them on their way to school and are visible from many residents' backyards. A local resident committee has been working with Hydro One to look at restoration of landscaping to bring it back to useable green space including new bike/walking paths. Hydro One is cooperating.

Redway Road Extension

Various Ward 26 Councillors have tried to get Redway Road extended to Bayview to reduce traffic through Leaside. The Board is against it, as are North and South Rosedale residents associations since it will increase traffic through our neighbourhoods.

Mary Fragedakis is opposed to the extension. We need to ensure we are not just shifting the traffic congestion from one neighbourhood to another. City staff is to write a report on the feasibility of the extension due this fall but likely 2016. Mary will make sure there will be public consultation.

In the meantime a motion has passed to lower speed limits to 30 km/h on non-TTC routes.

Parking Tickets on Douglas Crescent

On several occasions, residents have received a rash of parking tickets over several nights. Parking Enforcement responds on a complaint basis and must respond to complaints. They can't discriminate between residents' vehicles (who may have no other place to park) and construction vehicles. Since it is against the law to park for more than 3 hours, the only solution is to seek permit parking. The Board has offered guidance on seeking it from the City, but affected residents are not in agreement.

In the meantime, residents can minimize problems by parking close to the curb and retracting your mirrors to avoid blocking trucks and school buses, and not parking on both sides of the street or across from others' driveways if possible.

Don Valley Brick Works Park: Foot/Bike Traffic at Top of North Slope

Some Douglas Crescent residents whose properties back onto the north slope have had members of the public enter their yards to get to the street. Some neighbours asked GBRA to contact the City about somehow preventing individuals from accessing the land at the top of the North Slope. It is a protected archeological site, unsafe and people end up trespassing through people's backyards to get to the street (since the west slope is very steep). Late last year the City erected signs to discourage users from entering the area.

It was suggested that some sort of fence may be the only way to prevent access. Other residents don't want any type of barrier since they want to access the Brick Works from their backyards. The GBRA Board will support either access for all (residents and public) or access for none. It will NOT support access for residents only and none for the public.

Most of the affected neighbours and GBRA's Jeff Hanemaayer met September 21 to see what the majority wants before the GBRA proceeds any further. While some in attendance have had people access their yards on occasion, no one had any negative experiences nor thought a barrier is warranted.

However residents are wondering if the Fire Dept. could react effectively if one of the occasional bonfires got out of control, which could threaten nearby homes during a dry summer. GBRA will contact the nearest fire station to get an answer.

Nesbitt Park Skating Rink

The Board thanks the many volunteers who worked hard this past winter so the neighbourhood once again enjoyed skating in Governors Bridge.

Rotary at Governors/Nesbitt/Douglas Intersection

The new plants need watering and eventual weeding if we want them to look good. We need to find a way to get them done since the City has limited resources. Nearby residents have helped with watering. Please contact Chris Fraser if you're willing to help.

Vacant land at Northwest Corner of Nesbitt Drive and Bayview Avenue

The Board is trying to determine who owns it to encourage better maintenance.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Rail Safety

Rail Safety First was formed to apply grassroots pressure on all levels government to this very complicated issue that is under Federal jurisdiction but affects municipalities. Many residents associations are involved such GBRA, NRRRA and SRRRA. If you want to participate, please contact Chris Fraser. In addition, the GBRA is working with Bennington Heights School to ensure they have an adequate emergency response plan in place.

Stopping on Nesbitt Drive at Douglas Crescent

Many drivers come nowhere close to a stop. This is especially dangerous to the "walking bus" on their way to school. Some residents have suggested a flashing light but others think this will not be effective and may bother nearby residents. The Board got the City to repaint the faded lines on the road. We'll see if this helps.

Restricted Turns between Bayview and Nesbitt

Not all residents want rush hour restrictions enforced so the Board will not seek police enforcement.

Police Community Safety Notification: High-risk Offender Released

Toronto Police warned that a high risk man released June 8 after serving two years in prison could re-offend. They have identified the geographical area of Bayview and Moore as a potential area of concern. Simon William Gares (photo at right), 34, of no fixed address, was convicted in a 2013 incident of two counts of threatening death, theft, assault with intent to resist arrest, and failing to comply with probation.

"Two years ago, prior to serving his sentence, he made non-specific threats and it was violence against children in elementary schools," Const. Victor Kwong said. "He had served his sentence, but the Toronto Police still believe that the threat exists. So that's why we're asking people to familiarize themselves with his photo (and) with his conditions (of release). And if they see anything that might be breaking the peace or not being of good behaviour, to call 911 immediately."

His conditions of release include keeping the peace and being of "good behaviour," staying 500 metres from Bayview and Moore Aves. where the incident occurred, and to not possess any weapons, drugs and alcohol.

Anyone with information about Gares is asked to contact police at 416-808-5300 or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-8477.



Dog Walker in Area under Police Investigation

An area dog walker who has at times been parking his car at the top of True Davidson Drive (at Nesbitt) has been reported and is currently under investigation by police, City of Toronto Animal Services and the OSPCA. The car is a silver Hyundai Accent licence plate ARDV 369. He has been reported for regularly walking, off leash and unlicensed and transporting (in this small car) up to 16 dogs at a time, and for leaving dogs unattended in a hot car (animal cruelty) while on walks with other dogs. The police have indicated a first name of "Tony" and police report number is #2015-1075601. If you have any information or see any activity in reference to this case, please call 311 and reference the police report number. Please also spread the word to others in the neighbourhood. He sometimes has a woman dog walker with him.

Bad Behaviour in Nesbitt Park

On June 26 a house party across the street (on Douglas) spilled over into the park just before the police, fire dept. and paramedics came around midnight to that house. Since undesirable activity has occurred before, some residents suggested asking the City to install lighting. Others feel this is over reacting to sporadic incidents. Many neighbourhood residents use the park both day and night. Anyone who notices inappropriate or suspicious activity is encouraged to call police.

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OTHER MATTERS

Development and Applications for Minor Variances

Members have requested the Board to assist with minor variances for planned developments. Instead of taking sides, the Board will encourage the applicant and the most affected neighbours (usually the adjacent neighbours) to try to come to a mutually agreeable solution and mediate if needed. If the applicant is uncooperative, GBRA will support the position of the most affected neighbours if they are in agreement.

(City Councillor Mary Fragedakis commented that the decisions of the panelists on the Committee of Adjustment regarding applications for Minor Variances are not consistent with the Planning Act. Panelists have not been properly trained and decisions can be arbitrary.

Water Issues in Neighbourhood

In terms of any issues around leaking basements due to water run-off, residents need to deal with 311.

GBRA Dues are Due!

2015/16 membership dues are now due. The board and volunteers spend countless hours each year for the whole community's benefit. Please do your part by contributing \$40 to support our efforts. Bring your dues (cash or cheque) to the picnic on September 27 or drop them off at Treasurer Jeff Hanemaayer's home at 39 Douglas Crescent.

If you are a new member, please include your name(s), address, phone number AND EMAIL address(es).

GBRA Volunteers Wanted

The Board, committee members and current volunteers need help on many fronts to continue efforts to enhance the safety, value and enjoyment of our neighbourhood. If you can spare some time, please contact any board member.

Have an Issue or Idea?

If you have an issue that needs resolution or an idea on how to improve life in Governors Bridge, please send it to a board member. If it relates to the City of Toronto, please also send it to Councillor Fragedakis (councillor_fragedakis@toronto.ca).

Do we have your email address?

If you didn't receive this newsletter by email, we don't have your email address. Some GBRA communications are distributed by email only. If you want to be included, please send your email address to Jeff Hanemaayer (jeffhanemaayer@rogers.com).

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