

## **RARA Annual General Meeting Minutes — May 15th, 2018**

### **General Welcome, Introductions & President's Message**

Kendra welcomed everyone to the meeting, and began introductions of Executive Members with a brief explanation of her reasons for being involved with RARA over the past four years: to continue to foster this neighbourhood's incredible spirit of community, specifically by encouraging connections between older and newer residents of the Republic. Kendra proceeded to give her President's Message:

- Congratulations to all for a very good year, marked by many successful events—Rathnelly Day, Winter Solstice Parade and Party; Pour House Social, Easter Egg Hunt, Spring Clean Up.

### **Member Engagement and Amendments to RARA Executive**

Kendra acknowledged and thanked the following departing members of the Executive for their work with RARA: Emily Morgan (Mapherson Co-rep), Grace Zeppilli (Poplar Plains Crescent Co-rep and Val Davey (McMaster Rep).

- For those interested in taking a position on the executive, RARA is a platform for engagement with community issues such as traffic safety, development, rail safety, and civic mindedness. Members were invited to fill open seats on the Executive: Co-rep for Poplar Plains Crescent; Street Rep for Avenue Road; Co-rep for Cottingham Street

### **Social Media + Communications Update**

Key development of the past year: "going digital". Memberships can be purchased online, and members who purchase online will be automatically notified when fees are due for the next calendar year. The RARA newsletter is also available digitally to members; benefits of "going digital" include more communication, and, with Twitter, more "in the moment" sharing of news. All that being said, RARA is happy to accommodate residents who are more comfortable with non-digital forms of membership payment.

### **Political Business**

Welcome extended to the three MPP candidates: Jill Andrew (NDP), Jess Spindler (Liberal) and Andrew Kirsch (PC). Those interested in hosting open houses for our candidates are welcome to do so and RARA will happily assist in spreading the word about candidate open houses to the extended community.

Boundary changes on the municipal level affect the Republic. Effective this October, Josh Matlow will no longer be our City Councillor, as our community will no longer fall within the boundaries of his Ward.

- Pym Buitenhuis thanked Josh for his commitment to our neighbourhood, acknowledging the strong moral compass from which he worked, and his integrity in carrying out promises; Josh was presented with a collage of photos chronicling his history with the Republic.

### **Josh Matlow—City Hall Update**

1. Utility Work: Josh worked closely with Pym and Kendra when utility work threatened to interfere with community events like Rathnelly Day;
2. Glen Edyth Park: new playground is being built; much loved bench will not be removed;
3. Robertson Davies Park: Hydro 1 clear cut 21 mature trees; collective angst expressed at this 'mistake' led to \$200,000 commitment from Hydro 1 to replant and rebuild the park;
4. Mabin School: controversy is focused on the one and a half story addition to the school's space; adjacent neighbours are concerned with effects of this addition to their quality of life; Josh has led a number of meetings to try to mitigate the issues, and address concerns;
5. De La Salle: Josh is in favour of no townhouses being built here, and argues that green spaces are critical to the quality of life in a city; this is why he advocates the abolishment of the OMB, and favours replacing it with a genuine appeals body, so that decisions will be made to accommodate the needs of resident individuals and families; successes in this appeal include a reduced number of townhouses to be built (to protect the historic view), and the preservation of the Gatekeeper's House; 10 trees were to remain undisturbed, but were mistakenly cut down by the city; forestry staff "owned" the mistake and have agreed to replace the trees, which will provide screening to residents.
6. Road Safety: Nothing is more important, for Josh, than road safety, particularly for children and seniors; Kendra, too, has been vocal with respect to this issue; Josh and Kendra are working closely to improve road safety, arguing for more "tools in the toolbox" (not relying solely on speed bumps): for example, cameras in *school areas* (which require some definition) and digital signs; Brown Public School improvements include the creation of a 'buffer' lane around the school; the placement of splash guards along Avenue Road to prevent kids from slipping or falling; and an Avenue Road Corridor Study, so that road safety initiatives are not piecemeal but comprehensive.
7. Personally: Josh expressed how much fun it has been to work with the Republic, naming our martini glass street signs, our commitment to celebrating people who have been important to the community and our uniqueness in the history of the city.

### **Councillor Joe Mihevc—Introduction and General Remarks**

Joe's Ward now extends south of St. Clair and west of Avenue Road. Joe has been a 20 year resident of the St. Clair and Christie area; he is a former professor of Social Ethics at the University of Toronto, and a School Board Trustee; he believes that good politics is about building community, so although he is busy with various committees at City Hall, he will keep his focus on community.

### **Treasury Report**

Pippa Sargent, RARA Treasurer, reported a healthy account balance of \$55,000.00 (including GIC investments), the majority of which is earmarked for emergencies (legal fees, etc.). RARA sponsored events included a refresh of the MacPherson mural,

Winter Solstice festivities, the RARA web site, our new Hardy's Corner sign, the Community Social at the Pour House and our annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Pump Park. A full report will be made available on the website.

### **Traffic Safety**

This year marks our third year of concentrated effort on traffic safety. It began with speeding in the neighbourhood and sidewalk driving. Outstanding items include the bump out at MacPherson and Rathnelly, a crossing guard at the Cottingham lights, and a red light camera, a crosswalk at Poplar Plains Road and PP Crescent. All of these items are on the agenda of City Council, but implementation takes time.

### **Pump Park Construction Update**

Pym Buitenhuis shared that news that current construction within the Pump Pump would be complete by mid-June. The structure in the middle of the park is currently powering the whole station. The old structure is being rebuilt, and will unfortunately be somewhat larger, jutting out into the play area. However, it will also be more aesthetically pleasing. Following the completion of this work, Hydro will begin a second phase of work in the Pump Park and that will continue through to the end of August. This means that half of the Pump Park will continue to be unavailable for the balance of the summer. The good news is that power will stay on and the water will run all summer. Kendra and Pym will "keep the pressure on". A concern was raised about the parking gates: they are, however, deterring traffic (both cars and delivery trucks) from cutting through the Pump House laneway. A suggestion was made to ask for a new structure/splash pad to compensate residents for the inconvenience. Kendra promised to bring this suggestion to Hydro.

### **Rail Safety Update**

Claire Hervey and Nichole Anderson reported that this initiative began with a request for financial aid to improve rail safety in the neighbourhood, and evolved to an invitation by the Federal Government to participate in a Rail Safety Review, which involved meetings in Toronto and Montreal. Key stakeholders (the big railroad companies) were at the meetings and heard the concerns expressed by Claire and Nichole. At this point it's a waiting game. What will the Ministry do? July 6th marks the 5th anniversary of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. A formal recognition is being considered.

### **Mabin Renovation**

Unfortunately, the representative was not able to attend the meeting. Concerns were raised about safety for children in the neighbourhood and at the school, as well as for cyclists, particularly around drop off and pick up times. Kendra will bring concerns to the attention of the school. Residents who have children at Mabin explained that parents at Mabin are reminded weekly about safety and courtesy at drop off and pick up times; they also explained that part of the proposed renovation involves the widening of Poplar Plains Road so that pick up will not affect traffic on the road. The other proposed renovations at the school do not affect the Republic. Kendra thanked Mabin for being a fantastic partner at the Winter Solstice celebration.

### **Open forum + Q&A**

**a)** A question was raised about the shelter. Val presented her report: It's a temporary shelter on Davenport, near Ron's Garden Centre. It will remain open until the end of May, at which point it will close for renovations. It will re-open as a women's shelter. Duration of construction is unknown. Kendra reminded residents that we don't have a vote in the decision to have a shelter in our community. RARA's attitude is one of compassion and civic-mindedness. She also reminded residents that only RARA executive committee members should be representing RARA to the media.

**b)** A resident expressed concern that police do not come after a house break-in. Kendra will follow up on this policy, and reminded residents to use social media to alert the community of break-ins or thefts.

**c)** A resident expressed concerns about the dangerous MacPherson/Poplar Plains intersection (The Gateway to the Republic). Kendra reminded residents that a bump out of this intersection is one of the outstanding items on City Council's list (see pt. 4 above)

**d)** A resident suggested extending the Green Line - which will transform an underused 5km hydro corridor into a linear park and trail, stretching from Toronto's Earls Court Park to Spadina Road. Our understanding is that the park/trail must end at Spadina Road.

**e)** A resident expressed concerns about trucks parking in the laneway, blocking exits and entrances to the laneway. Kendra suggested that if this happens, parking enforcement should be called. A further suggestion is to remind our contractors not to park in the laneway, as a courtesy to those trying to enter and exit. Also, residents were reminded that contractors can apply for temporary street parking permits online.

**f)** A concern about Hydro's new streetlights, which are overpoweringly bright, was introduced. This concern has been brought to Hydro's attention; RARA is waiting for an update from Hydro.

**Kendra closed the meeting.**