

Rathnelly Area Residents Association Annual Report – 2019/2020 (May 2020)

Given the continued physical distancing restrictions we are all adhering to, we have opted to provide a written Annual Report in lieu of our traditional Annual General Meeting format. (The AGM was originally planned for May 20.

President's Update:

In the fall, Kendra Thompson made the difficult decision to step down as RARA President to focus on the needs of her family. Pym Buitenhuis, a past president and active committee member, graciously agreed to step in to support the role of interim President. The committee and community are extremely grateful to Kendra for her work on behalf of RARA, overhauling the website, establishing social media presence, strengthening the committee, actively engaging younger members and so much more. We miss her and are so very grateful for everything she has done for the Republic over the past three years.

For this coming year, the executive group will remain relatively unchanged but are experimenting with a hybrid co-president structure. Murray Campbell, a long-time resident of Cottingham, has been asked to step in as co-president on external relations. Murray has represented the area on big projects such as rail safety and the Avenue Road Traffic Study and we have asked him if he could stay on these projects as well as be the liaison with various levels of government. Pym will carry forward the internal workings of the RARA executive as well as community initiatives, particularly the upcoming Rathnelly Day in 2021. Murray has agreed to step in, and we are grateful. We will proceed with this model and vote on formalizing it when we meet in the fall.

Interested in getting involved? We are still looking for a Street Rep to represent Avenue Road, we have an opening in our executive ranks for a new Secretary to take over coordination and administration for our small but mighty committee and we need an editor to take on oversight for our bi-annual newsletter and other community communications.

2019/2020 Year in Review:

This year saw several key accomplishments achieved and a few favourite community engagement events cancelled as a result of physical distancing restrictions.

Winter Solstice

Thanks to the work of Nichole Anderson Bergeron, we had a very successful Winter Solstice party on December 18 with Shadowland Theatre providing entertainment and Rebellion Lane homeowners opening their garages with treats for everyone. While the temperature was low, our spirits were high! Many thanks to everyone. See photos on the website in the events section!



What was planned but didn't happen as a result of COVID-19 restrictions

- Community Social (March)
- Spring Clean-up (April)
- Easter Egg Hunt (April)
- Annual General Meeting (May)

Stop sign on Poplar Plains Road at Poplar Plains Crescent

RARA Co-Rep for Poplar Plains Crescent, Nadia Soboleva, worked closely with Councillor Josh Matlow's office and the city to install stop signs at the intersection of Poplar Plains Road and Poplar Plains Crescent. The stop sign enables people to cross safely as well as controlling speeds and curtailing cars making rapid right turns that endanger pedestrians. Thank you, Nadia, for helping make that intersection safer for our residents, big and small!

Local development projects we are keeping an eye on

- Mabin School
- 262-268 Avenue Rd. at MacPherson
- Davenport and Bedford intersection

Pump Park Refurbishment Update

We are waiting to hear back from the City on paused plans for the Pump Park refurbishment. We will also be looking to strike a volunteer working committee to ensure the desires of the community are taken into consideration as refurbishment plans unfold. If you are interested in taking part in this effort, please email pym.buitenhuis@gmail.com.

Rail Safety Update

Rail Safety First (supported by RARA) continues to press the federal government to improve measures dealing with rail transportation, particularly of dangerous goods. The introduction of improved tank cars offered some hope, but this was undercut by two fiery crashes this winter in Saskatchewan involving these new cars. A subsequent order to cut by half the speed of long tanker trains carrying dangerous goods through our neighbourhood was revised within days (without any public consultation) to 30 miles per hour or about 50 km/h, which is the speed limit on Avenue Road. RSF continues to meet with our MPs and their staff to press for shorter trains and slower trains.

Avenue Road Safety Coalition Update

RARA is part of the Avenue Road Safety Coalition, which is working with Toronto councillors and staff to reduce the intimidating character of the thoroughfare to make it safer for pedestrians and motorists and more compatible with the residential nature of our neighbourhood. We have attracted the support of area councillors and we are hopeful that new city staff will work to implement safety measures such as speed monitors and red-light cameras on Avenue Road even as new residential developments bring more pedestrians to the area.

Pump House Community Garden

Barbara Samson of 40 Rathnelly Ave, the original pump house, has graciously agreed to open up her gardens for our use. If you are interested in helping cultivate, water, weed and harvest our community garden this summer, please contact Rathnelly co-rep Luisa Zeni at luisazeni12@gmail.com for more information.

Bottle Returns:

We have seen an increase in people visiting out neighbourhood collecting empty LCBO bottles and beer cans. With the Summerhill Beer Store now closed, your options for bottle returns are St Clair Ave. West at Old Weston Rd., a better option with more space, or the Bathurst and Dupont Beer Store. We appreciate that this is time consuming and not pleasant, but we encourage you to take precautions and venture forth – it is very worth doing. And perhaps consider donating the proceeds from those returns to your local food bank!

Treasury Report:

The following is a summary of income and expenses for the period of May 1st, 2019 through March 31st, 2020. Please note that April bank statements are not yet available.

Income	\$3,276.88
• Interest earned on GICs	\$1,212.97
• Membership Dues	\$1,547.91
• Mabin Winter Solstice Sponsorship	\$500.00
 Expenses	 \$3,358.10
• Website Fees	\$450.39
• Winter Solstice	\$1,540.00
• Easter Egg Hunt	\$380.79
• AGM	\$361.92
• Brown School Playground Donation	\$500.00
• Pub Night (postponed)	\$125.00

Remember to renew your RARA Membership for 2020:

We generally see our membership sales swell on Rathnelly Day years and 2019 did not disappoint. Last year marked our highest membership rate to date – with 95 households purchasing memberships for the 2019 calendar year. Don't forget to visit our online store to renew your membership for 2020!

One-year memberships are just \$25 or choose the two-year membership at \$50. The Rathnelly Area Residents Association annual membership has some great perks: invitation to participate in community events like the Winter Solstice Parade, Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Clean Up, plus

paperless delivery of the RARA newsletter to keep you abreast of important things happening in the community like Traffic Safety, Rail Safety, Public Works projects. And RARA members are invited to join the Republic of Rathnelly Facebook community group – a private, moderated site that complements our @rara_tweets Twitter feed and web presence. And while you are there don't forget to check out our website to find out about upcoming events, sign up for the Republic of Rathnelly newsletter and learn more about our colourful history.

Think you might already have purchased a multi-year membership? Check under Member Info for a list of members in good standing for 2020.

Please follow us on Twitter, keep up to date on events via our member-only Facebook community, through the biannual newsletter or online at rathnellyrepublic.com. You can also find a complete listing of our RARA Executive & Street Reps on our website.

If you have any questions, please email info@rathnellyrepublic.com and we will do our best to provide an answer.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!

P.S. Stay safe and healthy and remember those in need on the frontlines and beyond. We are all in this together.