

SPRING
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SOUTH ROSEDALE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After another harsh Winter, Spring is finally unfolding in South Rosedale with wonderful shades of green and magnificent flowering trees.

The SRRA has been and continues to be very involved with a number of neighbourhood residential and commercial development matters which have implications for the District Heritage designation and the character of South Rosedale.

After over three (3) years of involvement, the Ontario Municipal Board ("OMB") has approved an amended development plan for the North St. James Town area. At a Hearing held on May 12, 2015, the SRRA settled with the developer/owners led by Lanterra Developments. While the settlement represents more of a compromise in development design than in density, significant changes and benefits were achieved by the SRRA including a reduction in the number of proposed condominium towers, an increase in dedicated parkland and additional retail space. In addition, the developer agreed to pay an additional \$150,000 towards public space improvements and to also reimburse the SRRA for a significant portion of its incurred legal and professional expenses.

We are aware of a number of potential developments proposed in the Yonge Street area where formal development applications have not yet been filed with the City. The SRRA will closely monitor these projects and become involved as, and where appropriate. We will keep you informed.

On the subject of Yonge Street, the SRRA was instrumental in the removal of off-peak and weekend parking on Yonge Street, which was negatively impacting traffic flow. The parking had been introduced by the City as a solution to a perceived lack of parking for Yonge Street business patrons.

As concern grows over the unsafe transportation of oil and other dangerous goods by rail, the SRRA has joined Rail Safety First, a new community-based group working to improve rail safety. The sole CP track connecting Canada east-to-west traverses Rosedale and, as such, unsafe oil by rail transportation poses a direct potential threat to South Rosedale residents.

This Newsletter also contains details for the annual renewal of SRRA membership. We encourage all South Rosedale residents to consider renewing their membership for 2015, or joining if they have not previously been members. In addition to the basic membership fee of \$75.00, many members include an extra financial contribution which is much appreciated to help fund the activities of the Association and more specifically, the professional fee expenditures noted above.

The Association's Board is committed to providing the South Rosedale community with a strong voice relative to the area's unique position as one of Toronto's most desirable residential communities. I personally welcome the contact of residents who may have any concern as it relates to our neighborhood.

David M. Townley, CPA, CA, CF
President



Rosedale birds - a Sharp-shinned Hawk, in Craighleigh Gdns
Photo credit: Frederick Larkin

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SRRA Joins Rail Safety Initiative

The SRRA has joined a new community-based group working to stop the unsafe transportation of oil and other dangerous goods by rail.

Rail Safety First (www.railsafetyfirst.com) is a national coalition of concerned citizens groups and resident associations formed in response to the dangers posed by the increasing volume of dangerous goods being transported through Canadian neighbourhoods. Safety concerns have grown in light of a steady stream of explosions, fires and other hazards involving derailments of tankers carrying highly flammable oil since the 2013 Lac Mégantic disaster.



Oil by Train

The sole CP track connecting Canada east-to-west traverses Rosedale and mid-town Toronto. As such, unsafe oil by rail transportation poses a direct potential threat to South Rosedale residents, especially those living within 1 km of the tracks. Notably, the train that derailed in Lac Mégantic traveled through Toronto along the CP rail corridor.

Across Canada, millions of people live, work or attend school within a 1km radius of railway lines – the area most at risk from fires and explosions. Meanwhile, the transport of crude by rail increased by 28,000% between 2009 and 2013.

While still relatively new, Rail Safety First has taken some important first steps. These include advocacy with politicians, policymakers and regulators, organizing a petition, and hosting a Town Hall meeting in Toronto on May 27th.

The SRRA supports the organization's call for:

- Reduced speed and length of trains carrying dangerous goods.
- Stabilization of dangerous goods at the point of departure.
- The immediate removal of DOT 111 tanker cars and their replacement with cars that meet international best practices.
- Access to transparent information about the transport of dangerous goods.
- Implementation of technologies to decrease the risk of future disasters.

The SRRA is also supportive of the advocacy work by Safe Rail Communities (www.saferail.ca), a community-based initiative established early last year by concerned neighbours in Toronto's west end.

The SRRA will keep residents informed of important developments regarding this issue through our website and newsletter.

ACO Toronto Seeks Donations for Research and Book on Rosedale Homes

The Toronto branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario has resumed a research project on Rosedale properties, to be followed by publication of a book on Rosedale architecture. The organization seeks to raise \$35,000 to support both phases of the project.

Archivist Sally Gibson recently catalogued more than 40 boxes of research materials, generously donated by the Neale family, and now securely stored by ACO Toronto. An author will be retained by ACO Toronto for the planned book.

The project began in the 1970s but had been shelved. In the intervening years, much work has been done, particularly the establishment of Heritage Conservation Districts in both South and North Rosedale.

Funds raised for the project will go toward completing the heritage cataloguing of all Rosedale streets. For the second phase – writing the book – funds are already in place to retain an author. However, ACO Toronto needs additional support to cover publishing costs.

For further information or to donate, contact Catherine Nasmith at 416-598-4144 or cnasmith@cnarchitect.ca. As a registered charity, ACO issues tax receipts for donations.

North St. James Town Development Settled at OMB with Improved Design

On May 12, 2015, the Ontario Municipal Board (“OMB”) approved an amended development plan for the North St. James Town Development. The revised plan reflected a settlement negotiated between the developers, led by Lanterra Developments, the SRRA and Community Matters, a not-for-profit St. James Town Community Organization. Details of the settlement were posted on the SRRA website during the week of May 4.

The OMB issued its ruling following a brief hearing in which expert planning evidence was presented by Lanterra. The SRRA and Community Matters were represented by legal counsel who confirmed the settlement terms. Three individuals with participant status also attended the hearing. One was in favour and two of the participants stated their objections. The OMB held that it was satisfied by the planning evidence that the development is appropriate.

The revised design comprises three towers – one at the corner of Howard and Sherbourne (50 storeys) and two (instead of three) buildings on the eastern portion of Howard Street (capped at 37 and 45 storeys respectively). The design provides for a substantially enlarged and usable park, increased retail space, as well as an open space area on the eastern tip of Howard and Parliament Street. In addition, through the negotiations, an additional \$150,000 will be paid by Lanterra Developments for both park and public space improvements in North St. James Town, as well as a financial contribution toward the out-of-pocket costs incurred by the SRRA and Community Matters for legal/professional and related expenses.

The involvement and efforts of the SRRA to mitigate the impact of the original development proposal for four (4) new condominium towers on Howard Street in North St. James Town have been detailed in numerous previous newsletter articles.

The SRRA and Community Matters sought and obtained full party status in the OMB proceedings. We retained the law firm of WeirFoulds to represent both organizations. In addition, we engaged three separate experts in the areas of design, urban planning, and transportation analysis to prepare reports and to be available to testify at the OMB on our behalf. Members of the SRRA Board also spent many hours attending working groups and other public meetings, interacting with our local councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam, and extensively researching the legal and planning history relevant to the development issues.

In December 2014, the OMB directed that a two (2) day mediation be scheduled for January 22 and 23, 2015, to determine whether the issues which the SRRA and Community Matters had raised could be narrowed down or even settled with the developer. In that mediation, the developers presented a revised proposal based upon a new configuration of three (3) condominium towers. This eliminated one (1) of the towers previously proposed.

The SRRA then engaged in further negotiations with Lanterra Developments. As a result, a tentative settlement was reached, based on the new design for 3 towers.

In arriving at this settlement, the SRRA engaged in discussions with our counsel, internally amongst the full SRRA Board, and with Community Matters, who were all supportive of the tentative agreement.

Given the uncertainties and prospective costs of the OMB Hearing, the difficulties resulting from the support for the development by City Planning and City Council, both the SRRA and Community Matters concluded that in all the circumstances the settlement should be accepted and supported by the SRRA.



The May 12 OMB Hearing was held to consider whether the settlement should be approved.

While this outcome is not perfect, it represents a significant improvement to the original proposal.

The SRRA benefited from the involvement of several interested homeowners on Maple Avenue, some of whom made financial contributions to assist with the OMB proceedings. A sincere thank you is due to them and to all of the other interested residents in South Rosedale and North St. James Town who gave generously of their time and supported the efforts of the SRRA and Community Matters over the past three (3) years.

City Council Ends Yonge Street Parking After SRRA Intervenes

Toronto City Council has reversed its previous decision to allow off-peak hour and weekend parking along Yonge Street between Crescent Road and the CPR Bridge (Scrivener Square). The change, which was passed by City Council on May 5, followed a community meeting initiated by the SRRA and attended by both Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam and Councillor Josh Matlow.

City staff were directed to revert back to “no parking anytime” signage along the Yonge Street stretch bordering South Rosedale on a rush basis following Council’s vote. Council also passed tougher “no stopping” rules during peak traffic periods. Similar changes were implemented several months ago on the Summerhill stretch of Yonge Street, north of the CPR Bridge.

The move to allow local Yonge Street parking was initiated by the Rosedale Main Street BIA to provide additional parking in support of local businesses. However, reducing Yonge Street to one lane during weekday evenings and weekends caused frequent traffic backups and was perceived by cyclists as a danger, generating significant criticism from residents inside and outside Rosedale.

The City will work with local stakeholders and the Toronto Parking Authority to review new off-street parking options later this Fall.



Branksome Hall Completes Athletics and Wellness Centre, Installs Compactor

Branksome Hall School (“Branksome”) has completed its new Athletics and Wellness Centre on Mt. Pleasant Road and, along with it, a garbage compactor at the facility’s North end.

The new Centre includes two swimming pools, a gymnasium, fitness centre, rowing centre, dance and yoga studios, dining hall, study and meeting spaces, and a rooftop garden and deck.

The placement of the compactor near the backyards of Meredith Crescent properties concludes an issue that has been a source of friction with neighbouring residents, who had raised concerns about the noise of deliveries to and from the compactor. The location was opposed by the residents and SRRA.

Under the original plan, the neighbours had agreed to accept the closer proximity of a much larger building in return for all waste management to be internalized as per current City policy. In December 2013, Branksome and the City signed off on a Site Plan Agreement locating the garbage compactor away from Meredith Crescent at the campus’s southern edge.



Branksome compactor

The 2013 Agreement was subsequently set aside by the City, and the compactor was moved to its current location.

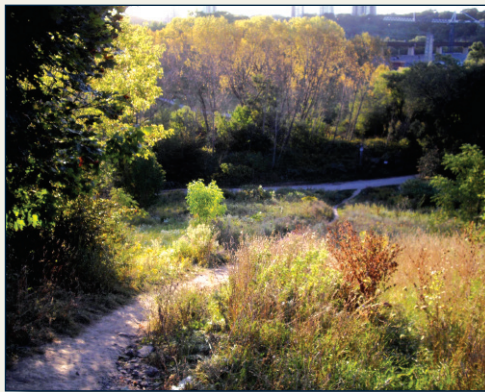
In changing its position, Branksome’s Administration argued it has a right to locate the compactor at the campus’s north end. The neighbours accepted the decision after an attempt at negotiations, and knowing that City planners and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam supported the location change.

A barrier wall has been erected by the compactor’s north and west sides. In addition, Branksome has previously promised additional acoustic and visual remediation, including more landscaping.

Several issues are still being negotiated including lighting around and within the building, and access to the campus by vehicles travelling northbound on Mt. Pleasant.

City Revisiting Chorley Park Trail Design Following Accessibility Workshop

City of Toronto staff are revisiting the proposed Chorley Park switchback trail design in response to feedback from members of the disabled community at an accessibility workshop earlier this year. Many of the workshop's approximately 30 participants called for a wider, flatter and therefore longer trail, with fencing and a path to the switchback through the park. This new City proposal may also include a second, more natural trail through the forest for people who do not wish to use the switchback.



The design will be presented at a third meeting of the Chorley Park Trail Working Group in September. The Working Group, which includes representation from the SRRA, NRRA and other residents' associations, Friends of Chorley Park (FOCP), other community groups and individual park users, was formed to advise the City on the trail design following strong community opposition to the City's original plan.

The City has indicated that construction of any new trail will not begin this year.

At the second Working Group meeting in November 2014, the City presented a revised trail design that responded to Working Group member requests for a steeper, shorter and narrower trail with a smaller footprint. The City's November design was an improvement over the City's original proposal, with less armour stone, an average grade of 6.8% vs. 6.1% previously, 380 metre length vs. 440 metres previously, and a 2.2 metre wide asphalt surface vs. 3 metres previously.

In contrast, the FOCP trail proposal called for a shorter, 290 metre length with a more modest footprint than both City plans, and no fencing or armour stone. The FOCP design met the requirements of the provincial Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) regulation governing recreational trails.

The AODA regulation says that, unless an exception applies, City park trails that are not "woodland trails" must be at least 1 metre wide and can't have a grade of more than 10%.

FOCP hired landscape architects Strybos Barron King to assist in developing its proposal.

Under AODA rules, the City does not have to meet the 10% maximum grade or 1-metre minimum width requirement if the City can demonstrate that the requirement would: (1) likely affect the heritage value or interest of the Chorley hill (which is part of the North Rosedale heritage district); (2) adversely affect plants, wildlife or ecological integrity; or (3) not be "practicable" because existing physical or site constraints prohibit modification or addition of elements, spaces or features. The City has indicated that its engineering firm has advised that its trail proposals are "practicable" for the Chorley hill site.

The SRRA has supported the goals of FOCP including making a financial contribution to assist its efforts to improve the trail design. FOCP thanks the South Rosedale residents who have made generous individual contributions to the FOCP sign campaign and design expenses. An additional \$3,000 is needed to fully cover the expenses incurred to date. If you would like to contribute, please contact South Rosedale resident Mario Elia at southrosedale@mail.com.

Call for New SRRA Directors

The South Rosedale Residents' Association ("SRRA") seeks residents who are interested in serving the South Rosedale community to consider joining the organization's Board of Directors.

New directors are required periodically to fill vacancies created by the expiry of current directors' terms of service or changes in personal circumstances.

The SRRA protects and enhances the neighbourhood in several ways: real estate development matters; road and traffic issues; trees, parks and greenspaces; security and policing; and built heritage preservation under the neighbourhood's Heritage District designation.

If you would like to get involved, please contact SRRA President David M. Townley at president@southrosedale.org.

Big Turnout From South Rosedale Residents at Community Clean Up

More than 45 people young and old put on their work gloves and hit the parks for South Rosedale's annual Community Clean Up in April.

With sunny, warm weather, the turnout was strong for this year's event, organized by the SRRA. Participants included many Branksome Hall and Rosedale Public School students along with parents, neighbours, friends and dogs at Severn Creek and Rosedale Ravine near Milkman's Lane. Together, they filled dozens of garbage bags with discarded bottles, paper and other litter along with waste from three abandoned encampments.

Volunteers who met at Rosedale subway station were treated to complimentary coffee and hot chocolate graciously provided by the Black Camel.

A special thanks to our student ambassadors James Thadaney, Claire Birch, Alex Ghimici and Simon Whittaker at Rosedale Public, and Caroline Thadaney, Parker Senst, and Elizabeth O at Branksome Hall.



Community Clean up



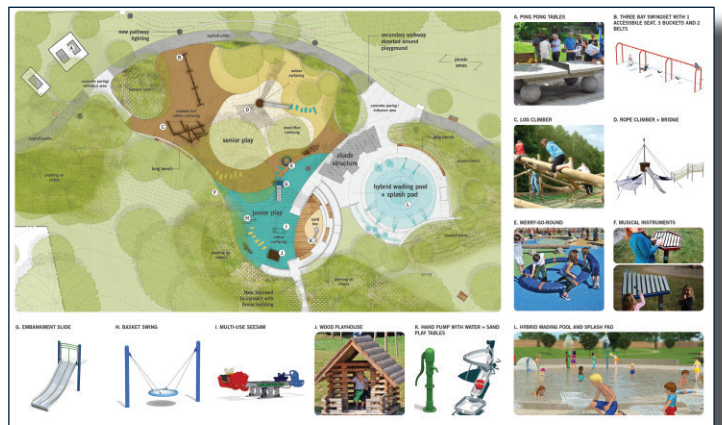
Baby raccoon in South Rosedale
Photo credit: Frederick Larkin

Ramsden Park Revitalization to Begin Later This Year

Construction work for the Ramsden Park revitalization project is to get underway later this year.

After several months of public consultation, the design phase of the \$4.5-\$5 million initiative is nearing completion. PMA Landscape Architects and City Staff are in the process of finalizing the drawings for the first phase of construction that will focus on the playground and tennis courts. Construction on the second phase, covering the rest of the park, is slated to begin in late 2016.

Ramsden Park is one of the city's oldest and, at 13.7 acres, largest parks. The revitalization project will address heritage concerns, increasing park usage, and much-needed improvements to aging recreational facilities, walkways and landscaping. For more information on the project, go to www.ramsdenparkconsultation.com.



Ramsden Park – final playground design

SRRA Board of Directors & Officers, 2015

David Townley - President and Director
Alex L. Murray - Vice-President and Director
Mary Lamon - Treasurer and Director
Gina Brannan - Secretary and Director

Jacqueline Allen, Director
Sheldon Hellin, Director
Don Hogarth, Director
Barbara McGregor, Director
David Moore, Director
Heather Senst, Director
David Sharpe, Director

Visit www.southrosedale.org for information about SRRA and news about your neighbourhood.