



LILY'S WEEKDAY UPDATE

Issues • Policies • Committees

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Hi Neighbour!

Thank you to all who came out to celebrate Taiwanese food, culture, and inclusivity at the [Taiwan Playfest!](#) The weekend capped off with a 6-hour concert with award-winning artists flown in from Taiwan. There was a robust crowd, many of whom were able to sing along with the songs that were performed. One of the artists talked about visiting [St. Lawrence Market](#) during her short visit to Toronto and it made me think where and how we could create a "must-visit" location in Willowdale.

As we consider how to strengthen economic and cultural development in our growing community - I think we need to dream some new dreams of how we can strengthen our local identity that will strengthen local businesses and increase our ability to be a great place to live, work, and play. If you have any ideas, please feel free to contact my office.

We have a great summer of activity ahead of us. If you haven't done so already, please download our event calendar for your fridge: www.lilycheng.ca/events

We also look forward to celebrating the [Turkcauz Multicultural Festival](#) (Many professional and well known artists, musicians, dancers, and restaurants will be there with their performances and mouth-watering foods) THIS SATURDAY AND [Canada Day at Mel Lastman Square](#) on Monday! While we will not have fireworks, the grand finale to Canada Day will be a spectacular fire show. I am grateful to the [Yonge North BIA](#) for putting this together.

SAVE THE DATE:

We are excited to partner with different community organizations to bring some great community events this summer! These events will also provide opportunities to share ideas for participatory budgeting, participate in our community centre survey and strengthen participation in neighbourhood associations!

Saturday, July 20: Community Environment Day & Eco Fair - Centrepont Mall

Tuesday, July 23: Goulding Block Party, Baseball & Movie Night

Friday, July 26: Willowdale West and EYCA Block Party & Movie Night at Edithvale

Wednesday, August 7: Avondale Block Party, Community Market & Movie Night

On that note, we are hoping to find someone to sponsor and support a hot dog BBQ for the [July 23 Goulding Block Party](#) which would be a great fit as we come together to cheer on the [Goulding Minor Softball Tykes](#) before watching [Kung-Fu Panda 4!](#) Please contact my office if you are interested in sponsoring or helping us find a sponsor!

Ontario Science Centre Closure

I was both shocked and devastated to hear of the sudden closure of the Ontario Science Centre. My family and I last went during March Break as our membership ended and I was planning on renewing my membership this fall! This is such an important learning space inside a remarkable building that should not be allowed to rot to the point of needing to close and/or be demolished. Many of us have fond memories of childhood visits that have now extended to visits with our children. We must work together to ensure we can keep this gem of a destination - whether it stays the [Ontario Science Centre](#) or becomes perhaps a new [Toronto Play & Learning Museum](#), if the province insists on moving the OSC.

The City of Rochester has the [Strong National Museum of Play](#) that is a huge attraction for parents in south-western Ontario. I have many friends who go, on an annual basis, just to visit the museum! Why could we not emulate something similar with the beautiful facility that is there.

This item will be discussed today and I will keep everyone apprised of opportunities for the city to take leadership of the site which is currently leased to the Province. We should explore setting up an endowment fund that can fundraise the large sum of money needed to refurbish and maintain the building while we figure out a long term plan for the site.

While we have heard a lot about the roof deficiencies, no one has talked about the pedestrian bridge that links the entrance to the rest of the building. The bridge has been closed for months forcing the Science Centre to hire ongoing shuttles to bring people from the entrance to the back to access the rest of the building. Apparently a report showed dangerous deficiencies and no money was allocated to fix them.

It has been heartwarming to see the rally cry of the community with many generous offers of financial and coordination support. Please [SIGN THE PETITION](#) and let's work together to pressure our Provincial government to reverse this hasty decision.

Sankofa Square - Yay or Nay?

The re-naming of Yonge-Dundas Square happened as an important compromise to save the estimated \$13 million that would have been incurred for a streetwide renaming. Renaming a handful of sites was intended to balance people's concerns while saving money. However, many people were disappointed with the process and the lack of connection between the word Sankofa and the Toronto community. It was hoped that such a compromise would result in people appreciating that we are both saving money while acknowledging concerns of the black community. Clearly, this is not what has happened as a result of this compromise.

That being said, ever since the name change was voted in, the word Sankofa and its beautiful meaning, "learning from the past to build the future," has grown on me. This is not the case for a large percentage of Torontonians who have cried out in protest at this name change. There are two key challenges that lie before us:

1. We are putting a historical figure on trial in trying to replace his legacy. That being said, Yonge-Dundas Square is the only square in the city named after an intersection rather than a community or a person (ie. Mel Lastman Sq. or David Pecaut Sq.) If we want to create our own "Times Square," it would be fitting to go through a re-imagining of the square - including its name. This would be a more inspiring purpose and process than trying to analyze a complex and controversial history.
2. **Strengthening participation and trust in democracy must be a value in every decision we make.** The divisiveness that has resulted from this process has been hurtful to both the black community and those who support the legacy of Henry Dundas. I still remember when the Sky Dome was named and the excitement and ownership we all felt when that name was chosen. Foisting a singular option without public participation is a lost opportunity to instead invite people to share a greater vision of what we can build together.

Myth Busting

It must be said that this re-naming is NOT going to cost \$13 million which I have seen shared widely on social media. Further, any cost incurred is currently proposed to be covered under Section 37 funding and private sponsorship. Section 37 is money negotiated from developers that can only be designated to local capital costs. Hence this money could not be allocated to programs supporting the black community as has been proposed. Whether or not Section 37 money should be allocated to this is the decision of the local councillor in consultation with his constituents.

The difficulty of this moment is the delay and potential cost of undoing the re-naming to enter a new process that would not necessarily garner something better because the process has already been politicized in a way that will be difficult to shift. If this wasn't about the legacy of Henry Dundas and just about renaming, Sankofa Square is to me, a far more beautiful and inspiring name - once the idea and meaning is socialized; but, moving forward without the buy-in of the greater community will further erode trust in our democratic process and institution. So it will be an interesting discussion today and we shall see what kind of bridge or compromise is possible.

Toronto Police Board

It was a relief to have a board meeting that ended at 5pm and not 10pm this month! Here are some highlights from the Chief's monthly update ([Click Here](#) to view the entire update):

Hate Crime Statistics

Since October 7th, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) has attended 1,378 hate crime calls for service, including:

- 45 hate crimes request for service per month

- 107 arrests during this time
- 268 hate crime-related charges which include mischief, assault and uttering threats
- There are currently an average of 5 hate crimes/day
- Anti-Semitism continues to account for more reported hate crimes than any other category. Of the 221 hate crimes so far in 2024, 44.8% were anti-Semitic and 88% of these were crimes against property.

On Gun Violence

“Our city is experiencing an increase in gun violence. The Service prioritizes our response to gun crime because of the impact it has on our communities. Our Gun Violence Strategy takes a whole of service and dynamic approach. We are deploying significant resources to address these violent criminal acts:

- We are prioritizing the response to shooting calls for Service. Last week, in those six shootings I mentioned, our average response time was 2.4 minutes. In a growing city, where we are receiving more and more calls each year, including gun calls, we continue to make improvements in our response times for these top priority calls.
- We are seizing firearms. So far this year, we have made 490 arrests for firearms offences.
- We are conducting more bail compliance checks to ensure firearms offenders are following conditions of their release.
- So far this year, we have conducted approximately 10,000 checks.”

Evaluation of the 2023 Promotional Processes

The 2023 promotional process that happened for Sergeant and Staff Sergeants was a revamp of previous processes that many felt were unfair and could easily result in nepotism. The service designed a new process with greater transparency and clarity on how people can get promoted. However, there remain some gaps in terms of representation of those who were promoted which means there is still some work to be done to identify systemic barriers and how the service can support career development equitably. To that end, I moved a motion to ensure the board’s **Anti-Racism Advisory Panel (ARAP)** can advise the board with their feedback on the revised process along with an opportunity for the board to also review the evaluation.

Here is the motion which successfully passed:

The Board direct the Executive Director to review the evaluation report and associated data, in consultation with ARAP, and report back to the Board by Q4.

From the Trenches of City Council

Yesterday I successfully passed 2 motions that were amendments to existing items.

EX15.5 - Moss Park Arena - Governance and Operational Review

Chris Moise, the local councillor, has been concerned that this well-used arena has missed serving local kids and equity-seeking groups in the area. He would like to take back the governance of the arena and allow the city to run it instead. This would come at a cost of \$200K. Many letters have been submitted by the current board and users of the arena who describe a vibrant community that has maximized the usage of the space. I think it’s important to address the concerns around access and programming of the local councillor, but I’m not convinced we need to dissolve the board and start an entirely new operational framework. As such, I moved a motion that the city explore how these concerns could be addressed by the current board and operations as an option when the transition report comes back to council later this year.

Here is the motion which successfully passed:

1. *City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the City Manager, to report back on options to strengthen local access to programming and enhanced diversity of Board membership within the current operating and governance structure of Moss Park Arena for consideration alongside the proposed transition plan.*

EX15.3 - Advancing the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) and the 2025 Shelter Infrastructure Plan

The city will be looking for locations to build several shelters in order to transition residents out of the exorbitantly expensive hotel shelters. Currently, this is done with delegated authority which means city staff DO NOT have to consult with local community members when securing a location. Some councillors wanted to require local consultation and consent - however, we all know that very few community members would be receptive to having any shelter in their community and thus requiring local consultation would put the development of new shelters to a standstill.

Hence, I drafted a conciliatory motion that allows community members to voice concerns and hopefully also share ideas and potential locations in a city-wide consultation and engagement process. The purpose of the motion is to provide opportunities for the public to understand further the capacity challenges and to invite discussion that would perhaps invite opportunities for community members to provide opportunities about locations. As you know, shelters are such a contentious issue and every implementation encounters tremendous local challenges. A consultation at large that is not site specific would allow more residents to understand the challenges we face and allow for greater dialogue and partnership between residents and the city in solving this difficult challenge.

Here is the motion which successfully passed:

1. *City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, to launch a City-wide public engagement and consultation to collect feedback and ideas on the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy and the 2025 Shelter Infrastructure Plan to build public understanding of the scale of challenges faced by the City in developing shelters, to strengthen our implementation of the current plan and towards future shelter capital planning.*

Negotiating Community Services/Facilities in New Developments

This week I requested an update from city planning staff about the community services/facilities that will come to Newtonbrook at the current site of Centrepont Mall once it is redeveloped. Negotiation of community benefits occur at a couple stages in the development pipeline. Staff are currently working with the developer on their site-specific **official plan amendment**. This stage usually includes staff actively pushing for a greater non-residential gross floor area than the developer is offering.

At the later stage of **rezoning**, space will be allocated to certain uses in accordance with the Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan identifies the following as the priorities for the area:

- a) new non-profit licensed childcare facilities;
- b) new and enhanced park-based amenities, such as a splash pad, sports courts and sports fields;
- c) New public library branch, including partnerships and co-location opportunities with other city agencies;
- d) Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre;
- e) space for non-profit community-based organizations that are eligible for the City’s Community Space Tenancy Policy; and
- f) long-term care facilities in partnership with provincial agencies.

The analysis of the rezoning application will include how the non-residential space is allocated to the above priorities.

The long weekend awaits us as well as the kick off to the summer holidays! Let’s enjoy the rest of this week into the holiday weekend!

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Warmly,

Lily Cheng 陳伶俐
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