



LILY'S WEEKDAY UPDATE

Issues • Policies • Committees

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Hi Neighbour!

Happy Wednesday! With the significant rainfall that is happening, it may be a good idea to check your basement for leaks. The summer has not slowed us down, here is my weekly update:

Why so many Block Party/Movie Nights?

One of the challenges of a suburban ward is a greater lack of engagement than downtown wards. We have a lower voter turnout and it is difficult to gather people to mobilize to advocate on issues of concern. This means we do not have a voice.

One of the reasons I ran to be City Councillor is to empower our community to have a stronger voice at the table. Since being elected, I have seen our engagement grow from advocacy for Cummer Station to requesting funding for Canada Day at Mel Lastman Square. In a city that is strapped for resources, we need to be squeaky to ensure we get the attention we need.

Many councillors hold one annual BBQ to connect with local community. We decided instead to hold several smaller partnered events to foster a greater sense of connectivity and hopefully catalyze residents to join or form neighbourhood associations which play an important role in growing the voice of the community.

In the busy and stressful world that we live in, the bridge to democratic engagement must be focused on fun! We have many events coming over the next month and I hope you will come out and join us! We have also added two new Park Consultations to our summer calendar. This is a great opportunity to invite your children to also participate in democracy.

REMINDER OF UPCOMING EVENTS:

[Sunday, July 14, 9:45am-12pm - BCNA Community Yard Sale at Wedgewood Park](#)

[Saturday, July 20, 10am-2pm - Community Environment Day & Eco Fair - Centerpoint Mall with free Bike Tune-Ups](#)

NEW! [Thursday, July 18, 6-9pm - Willowdale Park Pop-Up Consultation with FREE Cotton Candy and enjoy the Thursday Night Concert Series at Lee Lifeson Park.](#) (Please note: the pop-up is NOT at Willowdale Park)

NEW! [July 22, 4-7pm - Holmes Park Playdate and Consultation](#)

[Tuesday, July 23, 5-10pm - Goulding Block Party, Baseball & Movie Night](#)

[Friday, July 26, 5-10pm - Willowdale West Picnic, Games & Movie Night at Edithvale](#)

[Wednesday, August 7, 3-10:30pm - Avondale Block Party, Community Market & Movie Night](#)

[Click Here](#) to see more events happening including activities at Mel Lastman Square.

[Click Here](#) to add our Willowdale Community Events Google Calendar to your calendar.

Beverage Cup Recycling Pilot

I often feel guilty using disposable cups for my beverage purchases. I am grateful to announce the city is launching a beverage cup recycling pilot. Hot and cold beverage cups, like those used for coffee, tea and fountain drinks, are now accepted in your recycling bin. Separate the cup components, empty and rinse the cup, and then place in your recycling bin! Learn more by visiting <https://www.circularmaterials.ca/beverage-cup-pilot/>

Centerpoint Mall is an Important Hub

Last week I went to Centerpoint Mall on a weeknight to have dinner with my family in the food court. For those of you who may not venture to the northern tip of our ward, it is a bustling place of activity. The food court was full of people and I have heard it is a frequent gathering place during the day for various groups of seniors. There are two things that make this place a great community hub. Firstly, there is a lot of seating that is free to use. There are no libraries or community centres that have the same level of seating. Secondly, there is an abundance of free parking.

I am concerned about the future development of this mall, and what it will mean in terms of losing accessible gathering space for community. Many residents have also expressed concern about the potential loss of No Frills. We are not alone in the area of mall redevelopments. Fairview Mall is also facing a significant redevelopment. Interestingly, I noticed a group has been formed to ensure community concerns are represented. My office will be reaching out to [Build a Better Fairview](#) to understand their structure and role in the development of Fairview Mall. If anyone is interested in supporting or spearheading a parallel "[Build a Better Centerpoint](#)", please reach out to our office. There is still time for our community to have a strong voice at the table.

Support for Accessing Housing

City of Toronto is hosting a series of workshops at North York Central Library to assist residents in applying for subsidized housing.

In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn how to:

- navigate through the City of Toronto, MyAccessToHousingTO online system and
- how to apply and maintain Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) eligibility.

Participants will have an opportunity to follow along with the facilitators in their own online client account. Some locations will have access to a computer lab and some will be held in a meeting room. Participants are welcome to bring their own devices (e.g. smart phone, laptop, etc.) to support their registration process. These sessions are led by representatives from Access to Housing's community partner agencies.

How to Join:

To reserve a seat at one of the sessions, please visit [their website](#) or call the Application Support Centre at 416-338-8888.

Workshop Schedule:

Location: North York Central Public Library, 5120 Yonge Street

July 11: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

July 12: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

July 18: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

July 19: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

July 20: 11am - 1pm

July 25: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

July 26: 1pm - 3pm, 4pm - 6pm

What Happened to Cooling Centres?

With heat warnings happening in our city, a few residents have asked about cooling centres. We reached out to Gord Tanner, the Director of Toronto Shelter Support Services (TSSS) and here is his answer:

"The City hasn't operated dedicated cooling centres for many years. When they did operate data indicated they were not that well used. There used to be one 24/7 cooling centre at Metro Hall.

Instead, Public Health launched a citywide heat relief network which highlights more than 600 publicly accessible facilities across the City and includes public libraries, civic centres, community centres, senior centres, malls, YMCA centres, splash pads, and pools. The range of daytime drop-in programs funded by TSSS is also open during the day. We fund some dedicated outreach through Fred Victor Centre and all of our Streets to Homes Programs deliver water and support to people living outdoors.

TSSS is currently exploring the feasibility of opening our warming centres as cooling centres next year and submitting the costs for these operations through the 2025 budget process. Many of the warming centres are undergoing renovations this summer to increase capacity and amenities (additional washrooms, showers and accessibility features). If our budget ask is successful the programs could operate next summer season.

In summary, the Health Relief Strategy is the Citywide plan. TSSS currently has a network of outreach workers connecting with people living outdoors and at encampments and is exploring the use of our warming centres as cooling centres in summer 2025 subject to the 2025 budget process."

If you know of any encamped individuals in your area, please offer bottles of water, and you can call 311 and ask Streets To Homes to visit them to check on their wellbeing.

[Click Here](#) for further information.

North York Council

Amidst the regular discussions on house demolitions and fence exemptions, there were two intense discussions that arose. First, the not so exciting business:

[NY15.1 - 79 Yorkview Drive - Application for Fence Exemption](#)

This item was deferred to September North York Community Council as the applicant is working towards compliance.

[NY15.2 - 214 Homewood Avenue - Application for Fence Exemption](#)

This item was removed from the agenda because the applicant came into compliance.

[NY15.15 - 6035 Bathurst Street - Zoning By-law Amendment Application - Decision Report - Approval](#)

I moved this item WITHOUT Recommendation - which means we are neither approving nor refusing this application despite Planning Staff's approval of the application. Why did I do this?

A large group of residents living in the building north of this came out to depute against this development. Prior to North York Community Council, we had never heard from them and thus did not have the chance to hear their concerns. Deputants were upset about the proximity of the balconies on the north side of this development to the windows of residents in the rental building, many of whom are elderly. The building to the north is 6 storeys, while this application is 12 storeys. Residents are also worried about the loss of their view and sunlight.

I will be meeting with these residents to better understand their concerns and see if anything can be done. However, I did emphasize to them that it was highly unlikely I could change anything given this application has satisfied all requirements set out by city planning staff. I asked if a development had ever been refused due to loss of views or sunlight of adjacent buildings. I was told this is not a consideration that would cause refusal of a development.

This will not be the first time residents are upset about a new development next door that is blocking views and sunlight. I feel badly we cannot stop this from happening and can only imagine the distress this would cause. Unfortunately, a refusal of the application at North York Community Council would result in rolling the dice to see what would happen at the Ontario Land Tribunal where developers would most definitely appeal the decision. There would then be a risk that the development could get approved at an even greater height. All decisions of planning staff happen in the shadow of the OLT. It is in the city's best interest to find an agreeable path with developers to prevent lengthy and expensive OLT processes that lead to outcomes out of our control.

We now have a couple of weeks before this item goes to City Council where we will have to decide how to move forward. I have also asked the developer to include non-residential space on the ground floor to help make a more walkable community with amenities on the ground floor as well as considering the use of community benefits towards adding affordable housing units.

[NY15.16 - 7-17 Nipigon Avenue - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment Applications - Decision Report - Refusal](#)

This application was the subject matter of a community consultation on Monday night. I questioned the usefulness of such a consultation in consideration that the application was being refused by city staff. However, I later realized it was the perfect opportunity to provide feedback to the applicant for consideration as they take this to the Ontario Land Tribunal where they will continue negotiations with City Staff.

Here are City Staff's concerns with the application:

Based on the concerns articulated throughout this report, the following is a summary that includes, but is not limited to, the high-level issues to be resolved by the applicant:

- Height, massing and intensity of the proposal and fit of the proposal within the existing and planned context;
- Setbacks and separation distances, including relationships to, and impacts on, adjacent properties;
- Impacts to the public realm and adjacent properties, including shadow, wind, and pick-up/drop-off parking;
- Contribution to half the mid-block connection;
- The inclusion of at-grade, non-residential gross floor area along Nipigon Avenue;
- The provision of adequately sized two- and three-bedroom units;
- Tree planting and soil volume requirements;
- Improvements to the proposed Traffic Demand Management measures;
- Justification for the proposed parking rates;
- Functional servicing concerns, including upgrades to municipal infrastructure; and
- Compliance with Tier 1 of the Toronto Green Standard

I moved the following amendment to the refusal motion:

That North York Community Council recommend:

1. City Council direct that the Community Planning hold a second Community Consultation Meeting should the applicant submit a revised proposal that addresses the concerns outlined within the report (June 11, 2024) from the Director, Community Planning, North York District.

Applications are only required to hold 1 community consultation. It could be years before a final application is agreed upon. This time lag means that residents do not have a chance to be apprised of the version of the application that is likely to move forward. No one likes the surprise factor when a new building is being built in your community. My motion creates an opportunity for community members to be informed of the revised proposal.

[NY15.17 - 10 Elmwood Avenue - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment Applications - Decision Report - Approval](#)

What seemed like an easy approval on paper turned out to be a deferral to September. The reason for this is that the applicant came and made a deputation where they expressed frustration that the one-storey building they are building on Elmwood could only be zoned for a restaurant and not for other non-residential uses. I have heard from many Willowdale residents that they wish there was more diversity in our street-level businesses. I would like to explore other use options with the applicant and work with city staff to accommodate this in their zoning bylaw amendment.

[NY15.20 - 49 Finch Avenue West - Residential Demolition Application](#)

This house is empty, boarded up and in a visibly deteriorated condition. The owner does not have the capital or plans to develop this land. Generally city policy is to refuse demolition requests without an application to replace the building due to the loss of housing. However, vacant houses can result in squatters or animal infestations and they are often eye-sores. As such, we do approve these requests to demolish. We will have to ensure the owner maintains the site in a good condition while they sit on this property.

From the ward beside us:

[NY15.4 - 1875 Steeles Avenue West - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Applications - Decision Report - Approval](#)

This was a contentious application for an ambitious development with three new towers atop two base buildings (one 5-storey and one 6-storey base building) along Steeles Avenue West. The three new towers will be 39-storeys, 33-storeys and 14-storeys in height.

There were many deputations from area residents opposed to this significant density that would over-shadow their neighbourhood. However, the most impactful deputation was made by **Sanofi Pasteur**, a pharmaceutical company whose land is zoned for Employment Lands. There is an existing rental building that sits at the edge of their property which is proposed to be demolished for this application.

For Sanofi Pasteur the biggest concerns include:

- Privacy of operations. They do not want towers overlooking their campus.
- Protection of zoning. They fear allowing residential at such a close proximity could lead to future complaints about smell or noise which could put their future operations at risk including the stability of the zoning of their land.

Councillor James Pasternak is the Chair of the North York Council and the councillor of the ward in which this development is being proposed. He advocated for us to refuse the application thus launching it into the hands of the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). This will be an expensive endeavour because Planning staff approved the application - thus the legal department will have to hire external legal representation and associated experts to defend the refusal. Councillor Pasternak assured me that the province is well apprised of this matter given the significant importance of Sanofi Pasteur from an economic perspective as well as their important contribution of manufacturing vaccines that are distributed around the world.

There was a difficult moment when Councillor Shelley Carroll advocated the matter be referred back to staff for further examination with intentional discussion with the Intergovernmental Division and Economic and Cultural Development. She also confirmed the province wanted a seat at the table to discuss this matter further. She made the case that going through an expensive OLT process was a gamble.

Councillor Pasternak felt the applicant and city had four years to try and find a win-win. However, the gap between Sanofi Pasteur's desire for a 10-12-storey

building was too far a gap to the multi-storey development with a maximum height of 39 storeys.

In the end, I chose to support Councillor Pasternak whose desire to refuse the application was supported also by Councillor Burnside and Deputy Mayor Colle. In general, I prefer to support local councillors on local matters given they have the closest relationship and proximity to the issues.

THIS WEEKEND at the Square

The [@YongeNorthYork](#) International Food + Drink Festival ([@intlfoodanddrinkfest](#)) by [@streeteatsmarket](#) sponsored by [@foodnetworkca](#) is coming to **Mel Lastman Square from July 12-14th** and it's **FREE!**

Meet craft brewers, wineries, spirits and cider makers, and more in addition to an eclectic mix of international eats. There will also be ice wine slushy drinks too!

You can also learn how to make various quick meals at cooking demo stations led by renowned street food chefs. There will also be fun activities for the kiddos, from FREE bouncy castles, to axe throwing games, and more! Enjoy live bands, DJs, dance classes, and even a dragon dance from [@soaringeagles.to](#).

Concluding Thoughts

Thanks to all who came out to the Dance on Yonge. We are grateful to local business owner Fiona Su and her passion for bringing incredible dance performances to our community. It's not easy to run a large event at the Mel Lastman Square and we applaud her efforts. She also shared she went through a difficult knee surgery last year which could mark the end of performing for many dancers. She celebrated one year of recovery with an incredible performance at the festival!

Have a great rest of the week and hope to see you this weekend!

Warmest Regards,

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