



LILY'S WEEKDAY UPDATE

Issues • Policies • Committees

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Hi Neighbour!

Reminder: Newtonbrook West Spaghetti Town Hall is happening THIS FRIDAY!

If you haven't done so already, please RSVP. Also, those who live in West Lansing can RSVP for May 7. Details and RSVP for both events can be found here: www.lilycheng.ca/events

WE ARE HIRING 2 Outreach & Events Coordinators for 14 weeks this summer to help us connect with our local communities! If you know any students - particularly those studying Event Planning or Community Development - please invite them to apply. Click here for details: www.lilycheng.ca/hiring

THIS SATURDAY 11:30-2pm! Neighbourhood Munch - World Tour Brunch. Join me and Mayor Chow for a delicious adventure! Help us welcome our new budding entrepreneurs who are being incubated at **Food Hall TO** made up of newcomers and refugees as we experience a global taste adventure. For \$40, you will get to experience flavours from the Caribbean, Tibet, Thailand, India, Spain, Mexico and more! So please come out and help us extend a warm Willowdale welcome to this beautiful new Food Hall! [Click Here to RSVP.](#)

Yonge Street Tragedy Commemoration

It is hard to believe 6 years have passed since April 23, 2018 - when one man's hatred stole 11 lives and left a deep scar across our community. Most of the victims that day were women and we later found out the murderer held an anger towards women. Unfortunately, only a few days ago, a man in Sydney also targeted women in a violent attack. It should not be dangerous for women to walk on sunny streets and in malls.

Please take a moment and send your thoughts and prayers to the friends and families of the victims:

- Anne Marie D'Amico, 30, financial analyst
- Dorothy Sewell, 80, retiree
- Beutis Renuka Amarasinghe, 45, nutritionist
- Munir Najjar, 85, Jordanian retiree visiting family
- Chul Min "Eddie" Kang, 45, chef
- Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Forsyth, 94, retiree
- So He Chung, 22, University of Toronto student
- Andrea Knafelc Bradden, 33, Slovenian-Canadian account executive
- Geraldine Brady, 83, Avon saleswoman
- Ji Hun Kim, 22, Seneca College student from South Korea
- Amaresh Tesfamariam, 65, a nurse who passed away in 2021 from injuries sustained from the tragedy.

Yesterday, some of us gathered around the temporary memorial to hold space for each other, pay respect to the lives lost and remember how our community turned hatred into love. We acknowledged the scars of trauma that many still carry when they walk down Yonge Street as well as the resilience and hope that emerged in our neighbourhood as we have walked together towards healing. One close friend of a victim expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to remember alongside the community.

Last week, City Council adopted 2 motions. First the allocation of funding towards building a permanent memorial. City Council also approved a motion to move forward in the process of evaluation and assessment towards the ceremonial street naming of Canterbury Place as Heroes' Way. This has been championed by Diane Broom, a local resident who has spent the last 6 years appreciating the tremendous courage and care extended to our community by first responders after the tragedy.

We Love Willowdale is a movement I co-founded on the evening after the attack. We Reclaimed Yonge Street with a walk of 10K people. Under the banner of We Love Willowdale, we started a neighbourhood volunteer network during COVID and a food bank. **NeighbourLink North York** has taken the We Love Willowdale baton to further serve our community. Maria Speare, Executive Director of NeighbourLink shared about their work in carrying this baton.

We thank the many incredible people who helped care for our community during those difficult first few weeks that followed. Some of them shared words of hope and healing yesterday including:

- **Sean Huh**, a local pastor who served as a chaplain, checking in on businesses to see how staff were doing, many of whom had witnessed the tragedy.
- **Omar Hassan** who became the caretaker of all the memorial sites that emerged across our community.
- **Laura Puiras** who helped organize the ReClaim Yonge Walk along with the Free Hugs and Prayer T-Shirts donned by volunteers.
- **Gloria Yip**, played violin - also played at Olive Square after the tragedy as music was brought to our neighbourhood as an agent of healing.

Beauty can rise from the ashes. Love conquers hate. This is what we will choose to remember.

Happy Passover

Many Jewish neighbours across our community are celebrating Passover until April 30. I was graciously invited into the home of a Willowdale community member to share in their Passover Seder. My son and I were warmly welcomed into their home alongside close family members. It was beautiful to experience the weaving of bible readings, singing of songs, lifting of prayers for the hostages and the generous meal that was served. As a Christian, I appreciated hearing about the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery over the course of the meal. It is meaningful to remember such a significant story shared across generations in this way.

Avondale Town Hall

THANK YOU AVONDALE for coming out to our Community Spaghetti Dinner & Town Hall this past Thursday! It was truly heartwarming to see Avondale's long-time residents and newcomers alike come out to enjoy a meal together and connect with each other over icebreakers and games, as well as engage with City Staff on issues pertinent to Avondale. Information was shared about Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety, Community Safety, Off Leash Parks and Community Centres, with time for Q&A. Thank you to all of our presenters who provided Avondale residents with relevant information and helpful tips.

We also discussed planning summer community events in Avondale Park, particularly a Saturday Farmer's Market! Steve Boyle, President of the WCRA (Willowdale Central Ratepayers Association), spoke about the power that like-minded neighbours can have in creating various events and initiatives that enrich the community. The WCRA Arts Collective has many events on their website that all started out with one or two neighbours thinking, "What if..?". We have many dreams for the Avondale community which can only be realized with the collective effort of our residents. Please reach out to our office if you would like to get involved in animating your community with movie nights, zumba classes, BBQs, Fairs and much more!

We would like to extend a HUGE THANK YOU to So Hungary - European Pastry & Delicatessen (249 Sheppard Ave E), a generous local deli & bakery that sponsored delicious desserts for ~100 Participants! Our Avondale neighbours enjoyed the beautiful cakes, cookies and pastries so very much!

Showing up is half the battle when it comes to creating change or making an impact within your neighbourhood. Thank you for coming out to connect with your community, and please keep updated with all future opportunities to engage through our e-newsletters, website and social media!

City Council

It looked like it would be a short council meeting on Wednesday morning when we went through the agenda. And then many people had many thoughts on various issues resulting in a long and drawn out meeting. Such is politics where brevity is not our strong suit.

Notable Discussions

[IE12.1 Post-Transition of the Blue Box Program to Extended Producer Responsibility and Results of District 2 Service Delivery Options Review](#)

As of January 1, 2026 the Blue Box recycling program will no longer be delivered by the city. The province has instead uploaded the cost and operational management to the companies that produce materials that need recycling. There are many things to consider as we map out the transition including:

- Will the new operator buy all existing blue bins or will the city have to get rid of all of them?
- If the new operator takes all our blue bins, how will we rebrand the bins so it's clear they no longer belong to the city?
- Who will people call if there is a challenge with their blue bin pick up? Will they call 311 or a different number?
- What will happen to all the infrastructure, vehicles and staff supporting recycling in the city right now?

The city will spend some time working out these issues alongside the new operator. There will be future updates on the transition. Initially, I'm not sure how much money this will save given the challenges that need to be resolved. There will be future report backs as details are hammered out. On the one hand, we are grateful producers of recycled items will be taking on the cost of this service. The city chose not to bid on this opportunity due to some of the parameters set in the RFP. Climate activists would say, producers should also pay for a portion of waste removal as all packaging that is thrown out results in a cost to our waste removal.

[EC11.4 - Alcohol in Parks Pilot: Evaluation Findings](#)

After a successful pilot project, Toronto City Council endorsed the expansion of the Alcohol in Parks program to include the 27 pilot park locations and additional parks across the city. Pilot project evaluation feedback showed a high level of satisfaction among residents and park visitors, with few issues arising and minimal operational impacts. In fact, more issues arose in parks where the program was not being piloted. Later this summer, the program will be expanded to ensure that a **minimum of one park in each ward** is designated. The additional parks will be chosen based on health and safety considerations and other factors, in consultation with the local councillor. Last summer, we piloted **Lee Lifeson Park** for the following reasons:

- No children's playground nearby
- Washroom on site
- Performance venue where people might enjoy drinking their beverage of choice

Moving forward, Lee Lifeson Park will continue being the park where alcohol is allowed during park hours. Some councillors added additional parks in their ward. Those who would like to add other parks can contact our office to determine suitability with public consultation.

More information about Toronto's program, including park locations, regulations and restrictions is available on the City's Alcohol in Parks [webpage](#).

[CC17.1 - Immediate Actions to Address the 2023 Taxation Year of the Vacant Home Tax](#)

City council decided to waive the late fee of \$21.24 for all residents who failed to declare their occupancy by the due date and refund the \$21.24 if it was already submitted. Council also directed the Chief Financial Officer to report back with a completely **revised VHT program design for 2025**, including consideration of the following:

- the feasibility of an evaluation process based on City **utility usage data** (including a legal opinion on the resident consent needed to do so);
- a comprehensive **communications plan** for the 2024 Taxation Year, including distinct multi-lingual mailings, partnerships with agencies and organizations, and internal communications improvements with Members of Council;
- **user-experience improvements** to the online and in-person declaration systems, including receipting, digital confirmations, and email and/or phone contacts;
- additional changes based on feedback received through 311 Toronto/Customer Experience and from Members of Council;
- feedback incorporated from **focus groups** on the items above, with an emphasis on **seniors, residents experiencing barriers** to internet access, and **multilingual** communication;
- the number of vacant homes in 2022 and 2023, and any other findings on the effectiveness of the Vacant Home Tax program in achieving **housing objectives**;
- options on how to make the reporting mechanism more user-friendly to seniors and other **vulnerable groups**;
- the feasibility of eliminating any proposed **late fees for seniors** and other vulnerable groups living in their principal residences;
- a standard practice of providing a **confirmation number or receipt** when declaring online;
- the inclusion of a **notice** in the Vacant Home Tax bill that allows residents to declare online or by mail that their property is not vacant;
- that **no penalties or fees** be charged to residents who declare their homes not vacant.

If you did not file a Declaration or a Notice of Complaint for the 2023 Taxation Year by April 17, 2024, your property is now deemed to have the same occupancy status for the 2023 Taxation Year as it had for the 2022 Taxation Year. New Notices of Assessment to reflect the deemed occupancy status will be issued and you will have the option to declare a vacancy or change in exemption.

[PH11.9 - Short-Term Rental By-law Implementation Update](#)

The primary objective of short-term rental licensing and registration is to limit short-term rental activity to principal residences so that residents have flexibility to supplement their income while ensuring critical rental housing stock such as secondary suites, laneway suites, garden suites and similar accommodation are preserved for long term living accommodation.

An operator's principal residence cannot include another space on the same property as a proposed or existing STR such as a basement apartment, laneway suite or garden suite or secondary suite, that contains both food preparation and sanitary facilities for the exclusive use of the occupants of the unit.

The registration fee for a short-term rental operator will increase to \$375 per year on January 1, 2025. The registration fee for a STR company will be \$10,000 per year and an additional \$1.50 per booking per night. The City will hire 23 additional employees to support the implementation of the STR regulatory changes.

All short-term rental operators must register as either an entire-unit STR operator or a partial-unit STR operator for the duration of their registration. A partial-unit operator may not offer entire-unit rentals. All rentals by an entire-unit operator will be subject to the 180-night per year limitation, whether a visitor rents part or all of the entire-unit operator's residence.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to read the motion with additional information concerning supporting documentation, in-person interviews and inspection attendance, advertisement requirements, unappealable revocations of licenses and fines.

[MM17.24 - Supporting Domestic Post-Secondary Tuition Fees for Ukrainian Students Residing in Ontario under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel Program](#)

A few weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2018, the Canadian government created a special visa inviting Ukrainians fleeing the war to come to Canada. In the past 2 years, over 280,000 Ukrainians accepted our invitation. As a result, a Ukrainian community has been established in Willowdale which did not exist prior to the war. I am grateful for their contributions to the fabric of our neighbourhood in welcoming other newcomers, sharing their language and food, and their support of each other. They reached out to me about a specific challenge for which I have extended my support in advocacy.

Starting their lives in Canada has not been easy. Many have had to overcome PTSD and language barriers. Now we have a group of young people who have embarked on their educational journey in Canada and encountered an impossible gap as they try to find a way forward. The CUAET Visa is a special status that allowed the Ukrainian newcomers fleeing war to quickly set up their lives and education. Children have attended local public schools and high schools while parents have worked. However, these students **do not have access to domestic tuition rates for post-secondary education**. This means many students are not applying or are declining offers of admission because of the high tuition rates for international students which can be as high as \$55K per year.

At this time, the path to PR status is unclear and therefore, there is no path for these students to attain domestic tuition rates. As a City Councillor, I do not have jurisdiction over colleges and universities in Ontario. However, I moved a motion at City Council last week to invite my colleagues to join me in requesting the Province of Ontario to extend the exemption from international tuition fees for post-secondary education to Ukrainian students holding the CUAET Visa in Ontario. We hope they will consider doing this expediently as the September 2024 school term looms in the distance. Three Ukrainian youth, the founder of **Ukrainians in North York** and the VP of External Affairs at the **Ukrainian Canadian Congress Toronto** joined me for a press conference April 18th at City Hall to share how deeply they are impacted by the lack of domestic tuition rates available to Ukrainian youth.

[MM17.23 - Heroes' Way Ceremonial Street Name](#)

Over the past few weeks, my office, in collaboration with local resident Diane Broom, has conducted a public survey to gather feedback on a ceremonial name honoring our first responders. Inspired by their heroic efforts in response to the Yonge Street van attack, this initiative aims to commemorate their contributions to our community. We've been grateful for the overwhelming support from the surrounding community. Last week, we adopted a motion at city council to involve the Economic Development & Culture department in assessing and implementing this initiative.

[MM17.17 - Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds from Various Developments for a Permanent Memorial to the Yonge Street Tragedy](#)

This year marks the 6th year since the tragic Yonge Street van attack. A motion passed last week to allocate \$118,000 towards the permanent memorial. In the coming weeks, assessment for a potential location of this memorial will conclude, and the City anticipates launching a design competition in the fall, with shortlisted proposals being released for public input in early 2025.

[PH11.2: Our Plan Toronto: Official Plan Chapter One - Decision Report - Approval](#)

The Official Plan is a foundational framework guiding urban development and land use policies within the City. This item came to City Council for approval last week. The current Chapter One was adopted by Council in 2002 as part of the City's first post-amalgamation Official Plan. Like other Chapters of the Official Plan, Chapter One also requires updating to reflect the changing vision for the city. This report recommends replacing the current Chapter One with a **new** Chapter One that focuses on advancing reconciliation, a Vision to 2051, and Principles for a successful and inclusive city.

Motion Adopted: I requested City Planning include faith-based organizations in their consultations on implementing the Official Plan. As aging faith communities sell their properties to developers and newer faith communities cannot afford these land costs, it is harder and harder for faith communities to secure space in our growing city. Faith spaces play an important role in providing community space, social services and strengthening social fabric. I moved this motion to ensure their voices are considered in the planning of our city.

Development Applications

At North York Council, we passed 3 development applications without recommendations, which meant there was no approval or disapproval. This bought my team and I some time to negotiate with the developers to improve their applications. That being said, there was very little wiggle room. As mentioned in a previous email, City Planning operates in the shadow of the Ontario Land Tribunal and therefore approves projects that will minimize the risk of an appeal. Here is what where we landed at City Council:

NY12.10: 18-28 Athabaska Avenue - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment - Decision Report - Approval The applicant proposes to build a 43-storey residential building, 518 residential units, and 172 total parking spots (51 visitor and 121 residential spots). I asked them to increase their non-residential space so the majority of their frontage on Athabaska would not be residential. This is something I advocate for in all areas of density because building a connected community means having more walkable amenities. These can include art schools, medical offices or retail.

Motion Adopted: The only amendment I made was to increase the ground floor retail from 120 sqm to 160 sqm.

NY12.9: 26-38 Hounslow Avenue - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment Applications - Decision Report - Approval The applicant proposes to build a 26-storey building, 305 residential units, with 78 parking spots. The consensus amongst residents who emailed, called, and visited our office was dissatisfaction with the project for the following reasons:

- Too dense.
- Will cause sun/shadow impact on the nearby garden and swimming pool.
- The project proposes an insufficient amount of parking spaces.

The development in question **will** transform the Yonge/Kempford Blvd neighbourhood. City Planning approved this development because it is within the mixed-use zoning with comparable density along Beecroft. A few changes were made through 4 motions to address some of the outstanding issues.

Motions Adopted:

- A communication plan for the resident living next door to the development.
 - Written updates on a quarterly basis for the duration of construction **and** when significant work happens.
- Increasing the number of visitor parking spots to 19 spots and adding 2 car share spots, and 1 short term delivery spot.
- Secure an **on-site** community benefit package in the form of affordable housing units that will be included in the future building.
- In the future, should the permit parking program be allowed in Willowdale, then the **26 to 38 Hounslow Ave** project and its future residents will be excluded.
 - This means that since the developer insisted on applying the new parking minimum bylaws to this project ([Review of Parking Requirements for New Development – City of Toronto](#)), then they are required to let future buyers know that residents from this building **will not** be allowed to apply for and buy on-street permit parking from the City if those future residents find that the building has insufficient parking.
 - This motion deters buyers who are drivers from buying a unit in this project and encourages the developer to increase the amount of parking spaces if they find that there is demand for it.

NY12.11: 461 Sheppard Avenue East - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment - Decision Report - Approval The applicant proposes to build a 44-storey building, 513 residential units, 372 square metres of ground floor retail, and 113 total parking spots (7 visitor & 120 residential).

This project takes advantage of the new parking minimum bylaws ([Review of Parking Requirements for New Development – City of Toronto](#)) which I have concerns about as a Councillor of a suburb where most people drive and where there aren't any public parking lots nearby. My motion for this project was two-fold.

Motions Adopted:

- Increase the amount of visitor parking spaces from 7 to 14 spots.
- Similar to the Hounslow project, this project is excluded from the paid permit parking program should the program be allowed in Willowdale in the near future.
 - This means that since the developer insisted on applying the new parking minimum bylaws to this project, they are required to let future buyers know that residents from this building **will not** be allowed to apply for and buy on-street permit parking from the City if those future residents find that the building has insufficient parking.
 - This motion deters buyers who are drivers from buying a unit in this project and encourages the developer to increase the amount of parking spaces if they find that there is demand for it.

Thank you for taking the time to read my update. Hope to see all Newtonbrook West Neighbours THIS FRIDAY!

Warmest Regards,

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