



LILY'S WEEKDAY UPDATE

Issues • Policies • Committees

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Hi Neighbour!

Last week I joined many of my colleagues for a Celebration of Life for Councillor Jaye Robinson. It was a beautiful ceremony that captured who she was beyond being a City Councillor. The moment I saw her 3 sons serving as pallbearers for their mother's ashes I started to weep. Luckily, Councillor Crisanti had Kleenex ready to hand over to me! I am certain it must have broken her heart to have to leave her boys so soon. Each of her 3 sons was so eloquent in capturing the woman I never got to know. She previously served in Economic Development and Culture for the City of Toronto and spearheaded many initiatives we all enjoy including Summerlicious, Winterlicious, and the Toronto Moose sculptures that dotted our streets. The many eulogies captured someone who was passionate about serving, passionate about the city, and passionate about her family. If she had heard her sons speak, she would have been proud. They conveyed a deep love and admiration while also sharing parts of their lives that made everyone laugh.

She became a City Councillor when her kids were just a little older than mine. To hear how she was a serial photo taker and made them do family performances was so beautiful. It gave me hope that amidst the busyness of the role, she was able to make great memories with her kids and her husband. This is an ongoing challenge for me and I have to fight to carve out time to ensure my kids also have memories of growing up with me.

Death is a teacher to all of us. Leaving the funeral in addition to thinking about family priorities, I also thought about how the slice of life we share with our councillor colleagues is just a small glimpse, mostly at committee meetings and council floor. Each of them have stories, unique quirks and passions to be discovered with time being the greatest limiting factor. Moving forward, I want to take the moment when it arises to connect on a more meaningful level with my fellow councillors.

Speaking of death, a local faith leader has recently started hosting a regular "Death Café." Although it may sound morbid, it is an important opportunity for anyone who shows up to talk about death. All of this happens over cake! Anyone interested can contact Lansing United Church for future dates and details. I believe talking and thinking about death can be a healthy part of life and can help us live more purposefully.

Mel Lastman Square Fountain

Great News! The fountain will be fixed. **It will happen to the tune of approximately \$185K**, which will not be an enduring fix, but one that can help our square continue to be the lively and important centre of action in our community. It will be nice to have it functional, although I do not believe they are fixing the wind chimes and LED screen that have also broken.

Corporate Real Estate has committed to doing a review of Mel Lastman Square towards planning a refresh which I hope can align with the construction of Transform Yonge. Previous plans for a refresh of Mel Lastman Square, that had mysteriously disappeared, recently resurfaced and I'm hoping any previous work can move us forward faster towards a redesign that makes the space more accessible and facilitates further community building. I also wouldn't mind replacing what I call our 1980s Rocket Ship Fountain.

Some of the challenges in the square include:

- Inadequate electrical wiring with some unstable switches which means large events often have to bring in costly electricians for additional power and wiring
- The current design of the square does not meet accessibility standards
- Patches of grass are hard to upkeep with ongoing animations
- People from the sidewalk cannot see what is happening on the stage which poses a challenge to event planners that have to work towards pulling people from the upper deck to the lower deck.
- The square is showing its age with dirty and cracked concrete and many repairs needed.

June is Seniors' Month!

Happy Seniors' Month! We cannot express enough how grateful we are for the seniors in our community and how they inspire our work everyday. To show our appreciation, we have decided to highlight one senior from our community each week in June, among the many who contribute to the vibrancy and wellbeing of our neighbourhood.

This week, we are thrilled to introduce you to **Ahmad Fallah, a 78-year-old who reached out to our office to advocate for a weekly gathering space for a group of seniors**. For the past year, Ahmad has been spearheading this initiative, supporting the wellbeing of this group through gatherings that foster connectivity and a sense of belonging. Ahmad says, **"I feel that I am responsible for giving back to my senior community by supporting their wellbeing."**

Thank you, Ahmad, for your dedication and inspiring efforts!

This June, we're celebrating many cultures in our community!

June is **Portuguese Heritage Month**, **Filipino Heritage Month**, **Italian Heritage Month**, and **National Indigenous History Month**. I feel fortunate to live in a city where I have the opportunity to learn and embrace the cultures and traditions of various ethnic groups around the globe. I hope you join me this month in learning more about the **rich Portuguese history** of our city, trying out a **local Filipino food spot** (like Pinoy Hub or Jollibee at Centrepoint Mall!), and exploring the **vibrant Italian communities** nestled within our city streets. Let's also take this time to **acknowledge and celebrate the profound legacy and contributions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada**. Whether you're attending cultural events or just talking with a neighbour, let's strengthen our understanding of the tapestry that makes our city so wonderfully diverse!

Happy Pride Month!

This June, let's reaffirm our commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive community **where everyone is embraced for who they are**. Join us in spreading love and acceptance as we light up the **Toronto Sign** at Nathan Phillips Square throughout the month!

Youth Council Update

The Willowdale Youth Council met for their second round of Leadership Elections last Monday, May 27th at **TNG North York Youth Drop-in Centre**. Seven new candidates presented their ideas for Willowdale in the scope of Mental Health Supports, Community Safety, and Community Connectivity. Six additional candidates who presented in April for the President/Vice-president elections put their names forward for this round of elections as well.

Students gave insightful presentations on the issues and challenges faced by residents in Willowdale, and offered creative and well thought out solutions such as mental health awareness workshops, campaigns and peer support, online resource hub for volunteering and employment, raising awareness and creating resources for emergency routes and exits, a youth activity card in partnership with local businesses and services, addressing misinformation, and community-sewn quilts to care for neighbours in need.

Through Q&A and voting, three students were elected for the remaining executive positions of Willowdale Youth Council. The leadership team consists of:

Brandon Woo, President
Dahlia Zarrabian, Vice-President
Lucas Pham, Secretary
Jenny Ma, Project Coordinator
Ryker Del Mundo, candidate for Council Representative

We are so excited to see the Youth Council beginning to take formal shape and embark on a journey of materializing their dreams for Willowdale! Please stay tuned and share our journey with the Willowdale Youth Council as they work with our community to improve connectivity, mental health, safety and more.

Neighbourhood Watch Webinar

THANK YOU to everyone who attended the Virtual Neighbourhood Watch webinar on Wednesday, May 29! I hope that it was an informative and useful session that encouraged you to start or join a Neighbourhood Watch of your own.

For those who were not able to attend, please [Click Here](#) for a recorded video of the meeting. As advised by Didi during the webinar, here are some considerations for starting a Neighbourhood Watch:

- What platform will you use for your neighbourhood watch? Google groups, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

- Will you make communication within the platform one-directional or bi-directional?
- Throughout this process, you will want to start reaching out to your neighbours and get to know them, as it is important that you know the members that are joining a closed group. Didi recommended 3 degrees of separation for adding members to a group.

If you have any questions for Didi about setting up your own Neighbourhood Watch network, you can email info@ourneighbourhoodwatch.ca.

A huge Thank You to Didi for joining us as our guest speaker for this webinar, graciously offering a wealth of knowledge and experience with organizing Neighbourhood Watch networks across Toronto!

Congratulations to Harriet (Newtonbrook West) and Barbara (Avondale), who were selected as the recipients for a \$100 Metro or Loblaws gift card that will be used towards a Neighbourhood Watch launch block party! We are so excited for this summer get-together that will form a strong knit community against crime.

THANK YOU to our local grocery donors, **Metro (Church Ave.)** and **Loblaws (Empress Walk)** for donating the prizes and supporting this important initiative to mobilize the formation of Neighbourhood Watch networks for a safer, more connected community!

Our office has a new CFO!

One of our newest staff members, Sarah Jafari, remarked that while we are all very busy balancing our respective spinning plates, the busyness has resulted in a loss of connectivity within the office. I am grateful she felt she could freely share this feedback and she has offered to take on the role as our “**Chief Fun Officer**”. She will be bringing some levity to our staff meetings through team building activities and organizing some staff lunches so we can stay connected. **It is important that we are a connected community within our office if this is what we want to build externally!** Thank you, Sarah, for taking on this role!

A meeting with City Councillors from Busan, Korea

Last week our office had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation from **Busan, Korea**, two of whom have the title “Chairperson.” It was interesting to share challenges, ideas and insights. Here are a few of my takeaways:

- They receive similar complaints from constituents on road and park conditions
- Municipal governments in Korea do not pay for transit; it is covered by higher order of government.
- Property taxes in Busan only cover 13% of their operating budget. This was very interesting to me considering property taxes are the City of Toronto’s primary source of funding our operations. What kind of city could we be if property taxes was such a small percentage of our budget?

Chief’s Update

Every Police Board meeting the Chief and Deputy Chiefs give an update on things that are happening across Toronto. [Click Here](#) to read the most recent update. **Of note is the recognition of Detective Nora Hammond from 32 Division who received a Bravery Award from the Ontario Women in Law Enforcement.** Congratulations Detective Hammond! [Click Here](#) to read about Detective Hammond’s award. Here are some other pieces of information shared at the board meeting:

New Constables

New Officers are being deployed across Toronto including at 32 Division. From our Chief of Police’s update, here are some facts about our new class of 116 graduates:

- 46% speak a second language and many speak multiple languages, including: Arabic, Cantonese, French, Greek, Hindi, Lebanese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, and Ukrainian
- 89% have completed post-secondary education, including;
- 52% have university degrees, including four officers with master’s degrees and one with a PhD.
- 37% earned college diplomas, and;
- 14 were previously employed by the Toronto Police Service in civilian roles, and
- 14 have military experience.

Honouring Officers Who Died by Suicide

It used to be that only officers who died in the line of duty were recognized on the Wall of Honour in the foyer of Police Headquarters. Due to advocacy of family members along with full support from our Chief, the service is adding a new wall that is for officers who have died “**Because of the Line of Duty.**” Taking away stigma is very important and giving honour to these officers will also be healing for family members who previously suffered in silence and shame. This is a landmark reframing of something that needs to be recognized because of the many mental health risks of the job.

Dreaming of a Market for Avondale Park

Public Markets are a great opportunity for community members to connect, for local artisans and entrepreneurs to launch or test their businesses and for community members to access fresh produce. Ever since our successful movie night last year, I have been dreaming that we could have a Saturday morning market. I know many community members appreciate the market at The Peoples Church and Mel Lastman Square. However, a weekend market can be different because it means people in the neighbourhood working 9-5 jobs have the chance to participate as vendors. Avondale Park is also visible to thousands of people making it a great location to kickstart a market. This past week a group of Avondale residents who share this dream with me met with Marina Queirolo, who is the founder and steward of Market City TO. She brings great expertise and insight as we consider how to move forward. **My team and I have decided to pilot a market as part of our movie night on Wednesday, August 7.** We will keep you posted on how to register to be a vendor in the coming weeks.

ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan Review

A few weeks ago we discovered a significant secondary plan review was well underway without significant participation from our community. Because this secondary plan is located mostly in Councillor Carroll’s ward, we felt our community had been missed. We strongly advocated for a localized consultation and I am thankful planning staff agreed. **Hence last week, we held our own consultation to cover the impacted areas of Willowdale just west of Bayview and Sheppard.** We don’t want anyone to be surprised by the coming changes, so my team also mobilized with a group of volunteers to flyer drop in addition to the mailer sent by the planning division.

Our efforts paid off as the consultation had over 50 households come out!

At first some members of the community objected to the drop-in style of the consultation rather than a sit-down meeting, it became clear that many residents had opportunities to speak directly with the many planning staff in attendance which doesn’t always happen in a large format meeting.

Understandably emotions are quite high – in particular for seniors who were planning on spending their golden years in this community which they have protected successfully from this kind of change for many years. However, times are changing and provincial policy around adding density around subway stations paired with the need for housing across our city means it will be very hard to stop this change from moving forward. Here are some of my key takeaways:

- **Community members should plan to attend the June 13 Renew Sheppard Secondary Plan Review Meeting happening at Ethennonnhawahstihnen Community Centre.** It is at this meeting that staff will share proposed density maps being considered for this updated secondary plan.
- The lemonade in this situation is that land value for homes that can now be developed into midrises or high rises will increase.
- Some people were scared their homes could be expropriated for development. **While homes sometimes do get expropriated for roads and transit, please be assured they do not get expropriated for development.**
- **We should strongly advocate for TTC underground access from the southwest corner of Bayview and Sheppard.** The increased density in that corner could result in thousands of pedestrians crossing the very hectic Bayview and Sheppard intersection. I have much to say on subway access tunnels in terms of how they are funded and designed, but I’ll save that for another edition of our newsletter.
- **My best advice is for communities to build a coalition.** You can agree as a group not to sell which could slow down the transition, you could advocate with the planning division for what you would like to see in the transition, OR you could create your own land assemblies between neighbours and negotiate a higher price with developers. Either way, being connected with your neighbours can garner the best outcome.

Many thanks to the community members who showed up and for the planning division who made this meeting possible. Hope you will attend the June 13 meeting! [Click Here](#) for more information about the review and the upcoming meeting.

7-15 Steeles Ave East Consultation Recap

On Monday, May 27th, City Planning held a community consultation to discuss the development proposal at **7 to 15 Steeles Ave E.**

Currently, the site is being used for commercial uses at 7 Steeles Avenue East, as single detached dwellings at 9, 11 and 13 Steeles Avenue East, and one site

is vacant at 15 Steeles Avenue East.

The applicant is proposing a 50-storey mixed use building, with 683 residential dwelling units, 171 square metres of retail space, for a density of 18.93 times the area of the lot, and a total of 123 vehicle parking spaces and 513 bicycle parking spaces.

This community consultation was unique because planning staff shared that the developer's entire site will be expropriated by Metrolinx for the Steeles subway extension and the applicant is aware of this. Notice of Metrolinx's desire to expropriate was given to impacted property owners as early as April 4th 2024 according to an email from Metrolinx staff.

However, since the developer has chosen to continue with their development application despite Metrolinx's expropriation notice, City Planning is still required to go through the planning application process business as usual. The distinctiveness of this expropriation situation turned the community consultation last week into a potential formality rather than a legitimate step in the consultation process. I feel it is not a good use of our city's resources to go through a process that, if approved, will cost taxpayers more money through a higher payment for expropriation by Metrolinx.

Today is North York Community Council! [Click Here](#) to follow along. I will recap next week.

Many thanks for reading this update! Have a wonderful rest of your week!

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