

2015 WINTER NEWSLETTER



DEER PARK RESIDENTS' GROUP

Sidewalk snow removal program

The DPRG has taken the initiative in getting the city to remove ice and snow from sidewalks in our district. You may not know that residential streets in the old suburbs and parts of the old City of Toronto such as Forest Hill have their sidewalks cleared of ice and snow. Upon application, the city will remove ice and snow in front of the house of any senior in the city. Otherwise, our sidewalks can be difficult to navigate, after even a small snowfall when owners do not clear or make safe their sidewalks. There are by-laws which mandate that sidewalks should be cleared but these are not vigorously enforced.

The DPRG has been encouraging Councillor Matlow to bring this issue to City Council. We believe that our sidewalks are used far more often by pedestrians than other sidewalks which receive ice and snow removal. Also, Deer Park has one of the highest concentrations of seniors in the entire city, a population who often find it difficult to walk over ice and snow. We do not expect our initiative to achieve instant results but we intend to persevere until we solve this problem.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

67/71 Heath St West:

Despite the objections of neighbours, the DPRG and Councillor Matlow, a developer received approval from the Committee of Adjustment (C of A) last August to replace two original Deer Park houses in good condition with 3 modern-looking townhouses. Neighbours submitted an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. With the assistance

of Councillor Matlow, the city agreed to support the appeal by providing a lawyer and paying for an outside planner, creating the unusual scenario in which the city was appealing a decision of its own committee, the C of A. Two DPRG board members took the lead in the appeal and the DPRG agreed to become the principal appellant providing that it would not be responsible for any costs of the action.

The OMB hearing was on Jan 21 and seemed to go well from our perspective. However, we recently learned that the OMB Chair ruled against our appeal, despite a strong presentation by our planner and the intervention of Councillor Matlow on our behalf. We were very disappointed in the decision and consider these events as one more reason why the current system for approving proposals which contravene the city's by-laws is not working.

40 Heath St West:

In this instance we were more successful. Discussions between the owner of this property and neighbours, with the involvement of the DPRG Board, resulted in a change of plans. Instead of 2 townhouses which contravened the city's by-laws, the owner decided to replace the existing detached dwelling with a similar structure in keeping with the character of the neighbouring houses.

40 Oriole Gardens:

A new single family dwelling with a rear located garage design is currently in planning for review. We anticipate that variance will be truly minor in nature.

1427 Yonge St:

The DPRG was recently invited to a meeting with Councillor Matlow and a developer who wishes to construct a 41 storey combination condo-office building on the east side of Yonge St just south of St Clair. The discussions are in a preliminary stage and plans are now being submitted to the city's Planning Dept for their review. The initial response is that the building is too high.

SIGNS WHICH EXCEED THE PERMITTED SIZE

The DPRG was approached by a businessman who wanted us to support his plans to put a large sign on the wall of an existing office building on St Clair. The sign greatly exceeded the size permitted by the city's by-laws and was thought by the board to be obtrusive and an eyesore for those living in neighbouring condos. We turned down the request and decided that from now on we would not endorse any sign which does not conform to the by-laws.

PARKING ON YONGE ST. BELOW

WOODLAWN AVE.

Councillor Tam (Ward 27) whose ward is to the south of our ward 22 which stops at Woodlawn, submitted a proposal to Council to allow for parking in the evenings and on weekends on both sides of Yonge St south of Woodlawn. The DPRG strongly opposed this proposal on the grounds that nearby city parking lots were under-utilized and that the changes had not taken the impact on traffic into account. As of now, we understand that the proposal is to receive further study before being implemented. The DPRG has requested representation on the committee examining the proposal.

CHANGES TO THE TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT

HEATH & YONGE

Some time ago, the DPRG together with the city's traffic engineers worked out a plan to revise the traffic signals at this intersection to improve pedestrian safety. However, the plans needed to be changed because of an underground 'vault' containing various services lying underneath where a post was needed. We have been told that the city will now proceed with reprogramming the existing traffic lights at the intersection to a 3 sequence protocol, similar to the ones on Yonge St. at Soudan and at Blythwood.

IMPROVEMENTS TO YONGE ST.

Councillor Matlow has acquired some funds to improve the appearance in the Yonge St. and St. Clair area. The DPRG was part of this initiative. Improvements to the Lawton Avenue Parkette at Yonge St. are under study and a public meeting is planned to obtain neighborhood input.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (BIA)

YONGE/ST.CLAIR

Councillor Matlow has contacted the retailers and there is very little interest in establishing a BIA due to the short term tenancies of the retailers. The area is in transition.

REDUCTIONS IN SPEED LIMITS IN

DEER PARK

The DPRG Board has been discussing ways to make our residential streets safer. One idea is to lower the speed limits on residential streets to 30 km/hour without having speed bumps or other impediments installed. There is evidence that reducing the speed by 10 km will have a significant impact in lowering the risk of accidents, especially those involving pedestrians.

This proposal is not without some controversy, and a survey of DPRG members to obtain their input is pending. Meanwhile, City Council has concurrently initiated consideration of this change on a city-wide basis. In a separate move not involving the DPRG, the speed limit on Oriole Parkway beside Upper Canada College is to be reduced to 40 km/hour.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The DPRG Board welcomes suggestions from members for possible ways to improve our neighbourhood. We would also like to reach out to more residents with the hope that you will approach your neighbours to join and provide them with the membership form below.

Martin Myers

President, DPRG

Contact us at: deerpark@sympatico.ca DPRG P.O. Box 185, Station Q, Toronto, ON M4T 2M1

YES, I WANT TO JOIN DEER PARK RESIDENTS' GROUP

Date _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Email address for the DPRG email list: _____

My priority issues for DPRG: _____

I would like to volunteer in these areas: _____

Please print this form with a cheque for \$25 per household, payable to Deer Park Residents' Group, and mail to:

DPRG, PO Box 185, Station Q, Toronto ON, M4T 2M1