



The Annex Residents' Association

E-Bulletin May 17, 2011

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.theara.org>



TreesPlease: Call for Volunteers and/or Donations

Trees in the Annex

There are many reasons why the Annex is one of the most desirable places to live in Toronto. But an important source of its charm is its trees. And their value is more than just aesthetic. It is estimated that trees increase the market value of homes by 18%, decrease utility bills by 8% and absorb carbon emissions from automobiles and trucks. In addition, the unseen tree root systems stabilize the water table.

TreesPlease working group

The first ever community tree survey and planting program in Toronto was conducted in 1994 by the Annex community group 'Grassroots Albany', led by Amanda McConnell and the next survey was done 10 years later in 2004. Now the **TreesPlease** Working Group, under the auspices of the Annex Residents' Association (ARA), has been formed to build on this great pioneering work and start a strategic review of trees in the whole Annex community. The **TreesPlease** Working Group, chaired by ARA member Michael Low, will co-ordinate the identification and documentation of trees by the knowledgeable students from the Urban Forestry program at the University of Toronto, with the assistance of Prof. Andrew Kenney.

Why is this important?

It is clear the biodiversity and canopy of trees in the Annex has been depleted over time. It is also very clear that trees add significant economic and ecological advantages to our neighbourhood. While many trees in the Annex have died due to their natural aging process, others have been brought down because of neglect and disease.

You can help

We feel it's imperative the Annex develop a strategic plan to replace these trees, and that's the process the dedicated volunteers of the TreesPlease Working Group has begun. We meet once per month but we need help from others who have a passionate interest in preserving trees in the Annex. Please let us know if you would be willing to help either by volunteering some of your time or by making a financial donation (charitable receipts will be issued for amounts over \$20)

Send an email with your contact information to ARATreesPlease@gmail.com and we will be delighted to send you more information. Thank you for your interest.

Fraternity and Sorority Houses Update

Many of you responded to the City of Toronto's request for information regarding fraternity and sorority houses in our neighbourhood. Last year, Councillor Vaughan's office began a process to use the harmonized zoning by-law to have these houses classified as rooming houses under the harmonized zoning by-law. The members of these houses are strongly opposed to the idea.

To date, there have been various meetings at City Hall about these houses. On May 3, 2011, staff from the Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division held a meeting for neighbors who were affected by these houses. While they recognized that only a few of these houses are considered problematic, many neighbours expressed their deep frustrations and were looking for answers. On May 18, 2011, MLS staff will hold another meeting, this time for members of these houses.

In a May 2, 2011 email to residents who had sent the City letters regarding issues they had with these houses, Mayor Ford incorrectly stated that fraternity and sorority houses were no longer exempt from the rooming house classification. On May 13, 2011 Mayor Ford clarified this, with another email that correctly stated that these houses have not yet been defined under the new harmonized zoning by-law.

The Mayor also stated that the MLS Division is responsible for ensuring these houses are compliant with the current by-laws and, that if there is any violation of a by-law, they will be dealt with accordingly. In other words, the same by-laws that are applicable to residents are applicable to these houses. If there are any MLS concerns, you are urged to contact Jim Hart, Director at MLS, at **416-392-8445**.

A working group, coordinated by Councillor Vaughan, has also been struck to deal with these houses. The ARA is part of this group, as well as members of these houses and a few affected neighbors. The fraternity and sorority houses have submitted a framework of commitments for their houses. Neighbours have responded with their own framework. Both frameworks may be found at <http://www.theara.org> under **Residents proposal for Fraternity and Sorority Regulations_Apr29_2011, Framework proposed by the Fraternity and Sorority** as well as the **Mayor's Correspondence**.

The ARA will continue to keep you abreast of any developments.

Wynn Development Plans for Dupont between Walmer and Brunswick

The Annex is facing a development project that could have far-reaching effects on the northern section of the neighbourhood. Like the high-rise condominium tower at the corner of Bedford and Bloor, the proposal to redevelop a number of properties between 328 and 374 Dupont Street could see high-rises and significantly increased density in an area that has been low-rise until now.

The owners of the properties, the Wynn Group have released a concept plan that would see a 28-storey building with four floors of commercial and 24 floors of residential, an 8-storey live-work building, and a 16-storey building with four floors of commercial and twelve floors of residential. They would be built on the north side of Dupont Street, roughly between Walmer Road, and Brunswick Avenue

The developer has submitted an application for an Official Plan Amendment to change the designation for the site from an employment area to a mixed-use area. This would be the first step towards allowing the development to proceed. That application will be heard at a May 30th meeting of the Planning and Growth committee at City Hall.

At a May 3rd community meeting, residents expressed concern about the height of the buildings and the wisdom of locating them so close to a major rail line. Councillor Adam Vaughan told them that if the designation was changed to mixed use, the economics of the site would almost inevitably mean high-rise development.

At a May 12th meeting of the Annex Residents' Association, the board voted to oppose the change in designation until there is a comprehensive visioning study looking at all future development for Dupont Street. It is scheduled to be completed by local residents and Business Improvement Areas within the next 12 months.

Residents who want to make their views known to politicians and staff can make a deputation at the May 30th meeting of the Planning and Growth Committee, which meets in committee room #5, at 9:30. In order to get on the agenda, contact Merle MacDonald, at 416 397-7768 or 416-392-1032, or e-mail her at pgmc@toronto.ca

City Services and Recreation Review

The City is undertaking a major review of service priorities and wishes to hear from residents on this matter. There is a deadline of mid-June for responses and we encourage you to send in your response. The details can be found in [this document](#).