

Lowertown Community Association
L'Association communautaire de la Basse-Ville

MEETING NOTES / NOTES DE RÉUNION – 13 MAY 2013 / 13 MAI 2013
ROUTHIER COMMUNITY CENTRE @ 7 PM / CENTRE COMMUNAUTAIRE ROUTHIER à 19h

- **Board members present:** Marc Aubin (President), Liz Bernstein (Vice President), Mike Kirkpatrick (Treasurer), Sarah Bonesteel (Secretary), Michelle Ramsay Borg (Director, Communications), Sylvie Grenier (Director, Planning Committee), Steve Monuk (Director, Business Liaison), Vera Etches (Director, Members/Volunteers), Nancy Miller-Chenier (Heritage Committee Co-Chair), Liz Mackenzie (Heritage Committee Co-Chair), Norman Moyer (Byward Market Security & Safety Committee Liaison)
 - **Total community members present:** 26
1. **Welcome Remarks / Mots de bienvenue (Marc Aubin)**
 - Roundtable introductions.
 2. **Approval of Agenda and notes from last meeting / Approbation de l'Ordre du jour et notes de la dernière réunion (Marc Aubin)**
 - Meeting agenda and notes from April meeting approved.
 3. **Councillor's Update / Mise à jour du conseiller**

Present from the Councillor's Office: Mathieu Fleury, Councillor

 - **Project for Public Spaces Report (PPS):** will be discussed at first Planning Committee meeting in June. Important to have good community representation at the meeting. Staff recommendations are direct but general and we need community representation to be clear about what the community wants.
 - Question: Is it true that City staff are coming back to the Planning Committee with their recommendations in draft form (before they are finalized)?
 - The Steering Committee is an important group and Councillor Fleury expects staff to follow up with the group. The recommendations will be shared with the Steering Committee just before they are released publicly. An important question is what happens between the City staff and Steering Committee after the recommendations go to the Planning Committee?
 - The Steering Committee wants to receive the draft recommendations in time to review, discuss and provide comments on them before they are finalized but it does not seem that time will be permitted for this and the Steering Committee will not be able to impact the recommendations before they go to the Planning Committee.
 - City staff have a work plan that is more specific than the recommendations in the staff report.
 - Residents are feeling anxious because they feel they are not able to significantly impact the recommendations or outcomes of the report.
 - Councillor Fleury clarified that City staff are not allowed to release the report in advance of its review by the Planning Committee. It can only be released to everyone at once.
- **Arts Court and Rideau Centre:** important to attend upcoming meetings to provide input on re-design for both projects.

- **Interprovincial Bridge:** there has been much media attention for the proposed Kettle Island location. The Rockcliffe community is opposed to the proposal. Councillor Fleury has been clear that we need to find a solution to removing big trucks from the downtown core. He is waiting for a briefing from staff on the issue. The National Capital Commission and federal government had a briefing with our MP and MPP. June 22 is the public consult on the proposed bridge location. The consultation will be held at the Shenkman Centre. We need to ensure the Lowertown community is represented to highlight the issue of trucks in the corridor.
- **Ambassador Program:** students in green with bins and maps. This program operates on Rideau, in the Byward Market, on Montreal Road, and on Elgin Street. The City determined that it didn't work well to have students clean and explain what they were doing. This year, they will be more focused on cleaning than providing information.
- **Jules Morin Park:** the tender for the park construction has been issued and we should know next week who has been selected to do the work. The construction may impact park access this summer but the City and contractor will try to limit the construction impact.
- **Construction:** the Rideau project is going well. There was initially a huge impact to implementing a detour east of King Edward Avenue but it seems to be working out now.
 - LRT work has begun on Nicholas and Laurier to upfit that area for the transitway detour. The tunnel starts at 50 Laurier so there is a need to close the transitway there to prepare the area.
- **Sussex:** no details on the project. Will get an update from staff before it goes to tender and will get them to present to the LCA.
 - Question: planning to move houses and widen road? City hasn't confirmed anything but moving buildings was an option. The National Capital Commission is likely to propose moving two heritage homes. Decision to move the houses would need to go back to the Heritage Committee for approval.
 - Curve was traffic calming. Straightening it would make cars go faster and make it more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians.
 - City staff is given delegated authority to do the road project on Sussex. The project does not need to go to the Planning Committee for approval but if Lowertown residents have significant concerns, the Councillor's office could lift the delegated authority to allow for public debate on the issue.
 - Councillor Fleury indicated that information is theoretically correct but because the money for the road project is linked to the federal stimulus budget, it has to be spent this summer. The City staff is holding their cards very close.
 - Suggestion that Councillor Fleury suggest to City staff that unless they share their plans, the Councillor will lose the delegated authority.
 - The LCA has noted a fundamental error in the road project concept based on a mistaken road width indicated in the City's original proposal.
 - **Action Item:** Councillor Fleury asked that the LCA's measurements be sent to him in e-mail. The LCA has already brought the issue to the attention of City staff attention but will also discuss it with Councillor Fleury.
 - Noted that Councillor Fleury has a card to play (lifting of delegated authority) with City staff and that he may need to consider acting on it.

- Concern expressed that the request for a dedicated cyclist lane is being used to justify the plan to widen the road. Not enough thought is being given to the complete streets concept and putting pedestrians first (ie. widening sidewalks and lowering vehicle speeds). The downtown is not the same as other areas and we need to be more creative about accommodating pedestrian and cyclist first policies. Consideration should be given to taking a vehicle lane for cycling rather than taking space from the sidewalk.
 - Part of the LCA's key to the Sussex situation is to speak in the language of transportation engineers. We have to tell them that we want a design standard that meets the vehicle speed we want people driving (ie. 40km/h or 50km/h). The reality is that engineers design for 50km/h speeds and cars end up driving 60km/h or 70km/h. Based on the Ontario coroner's report, we should be looking at limits of 40km/h rather than 50km/h. We should consider asking for this for Sussex.
 - **Our Lady School:** the City has taken the building owner to court to gain access to the heritage report he commissioned. The City won so they should have access to the report soon and will share the information with the community. There are two additional court dates with this building owner coming up.
4. **Byward Market BIA Update / Mise à jour de la ZAC (Jasna Jennings)**
- **Auto Classic:** The BIA is hosting the 17th annual auto classic on June 2 from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Cars will be parked throughout the market and there will be some programming.
 - **PPS report:** the BIA is working on a position paper that will address all comments and themes in the report and will note the BIA options and positions. The document will be reviewed by the BIA Board of Directors next week and then could be shared. In general, the BIA supports the PPS report. The BIA is also concerned about the proliferation of restaurants and bars and loss of retail. They are happy to see the nightclub bylaw being revisited and would like to see recommendations from a previous report on the nightclub issue be implemented.
 - **Street Ambassador Program:** There are 11 young people in yellow shirts that will help tourists with directions, can provide first aid, etc. They are in the Byward Market from Thursdays to Saturdays until 8:00pm.
 - **Mother's Day:** This was a very busy day in the market. There were free horse and wagon rides from noon to 4:00pm. This was done in partnership with the standholders association.
 - **Canada Day:** The BIA is working on having a family presentation about the War of 1812 (18 minutes, 12 seconds long), which will be held in the area behind the Bay on Canada Day. May be some road closures on York Street to ensure pedestrian safety.
 - **Nuit Blanche:** The BIA is working with the event organizers. The call to artists has just gone out. Check the Nuit Blanche website for more information.
 - **Duathlon:** The BIA has been approached by the City about a duathlon that will be held downtown. This will be a world class event in August.
 - **A Frame Signs:** Issue was discussed at the last BIA Safety and Security Committee meeting. Jasna would like a letter from the LCA, explaining from a customer perspective why the LCA is concerned about these signs. The LCA agreed to send the letter but will also call 311 to request bylaw intervention when signs are noticed.
 - Concern expressed that Bylaw Services should be proactively addressing the situation of A-frame signs. Request made to Councillor to request proactive enforcement of the bylaw. Councillor Fleury stated that proactive enforcement may come from something like the PPS report but is currently reactive because of resource issues. Suggestion that fines for A-frames

be increased to address resource issue. Councillor Fleury stated that the 311 system was in place to provide a fast response and those residents should make complaints and get reference numbers via that route. If residents are not happy when the case is closed, they can let Councillor Fleury's office know and he will follow up.

- Concern that sidewalks need to be looked at holistically: pedestrians compete for space with bike racks, parking signs, etc. Need to look at all elements and plan it out.

5. Areas of Interest – Updates / Champs d'intérêt – Mise à jour:

• Planning Update / Mise à jour du Comité de planification (Sylvie Grenier)

- **PPS Report:** There was a great turnout for the meeting on April 29. Thank you to Councillor Fleury for his participation. The LCA provided high-level comments on the report to the City. The LCA supported the report and many of its recommendations. The Byward Market is important to the City and the change of governance is needed to ensure the vibrancy of the farmers' market. The report acknowledges the identity of the market is changing because of the proliferation of bars and restaurants but the report does not provide recommendations on that matter. It suggests going back to the 2008 report and providing more security. Sylvie did a survey on the number of licensed seats in the market: over 20,000 seats in the area of Sussex, Dalhousie, George, Murray and some on York. This is 3,000 more seats than there were in 2008 when the initial report was done. At the same time, we have seen a decrease in retail, especially food retail. The LCA has requested a five year moratorium of new licensed seats in Lowertown to allow time to identify strategies for moving forward.
- **Claridge:** The City Planning Committee approved Claridge's request to construct a 22 storey condominium building on George Street and adding four storeys to the Union du Canada building.
- **Arts Court:** The Arts Court is expanding with a proposal for a 17 storey building (six storey podium). There is a meeting tomorrow night (Tuesday) at Arts Court at 7:00pm about this.
- **Expansion of Rideau Centre:** The expansion will be on the surface parking lot and at the former Ogilvy store. This will be a four level retail space with three levels of parking underground. The meeting at Arts Court will also involve the Rideau Centre expansion.

• Environment Update / Mise à jour environnementale (Liz Bernstein)

- The 40ppm barrier (amount of carbon in the atmosphere) was broken this weekend.
- **Roundtable Update:** There has not been an Environment Committee meeting since the roundtable (past three have been cancelled). The Mayor and Councillor made commitments to move forward after the roundtable. Concern expressed because the roundtable was held too late (after the master plan review) to be effective. Liz is meeting with others from across the city to determine the top five priorities for action. She is also meeting with Councillor Fleury.
- **Cycling and Pedestrian Plan:** Tool available at: <http://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/public-consultations/building-liveable-ottawa-official-plan-and-master-plan-review>. This has not been well-promoted by the City and is only available until June 7. Can show your routes and make comments about difficult areas.
- **Active Transit Audit:** Will be held on June 19 at 5:00pm (rain date is June 26). Meet at the Routhier Centre. Purpose is to look at challenges for cyclists, pedestrians, those with strollers or canes, those in motorized chairs, etc. The audit will cover the area from King Edward Avenue to the Byward Market. The will compile a report and follow up with Councillor Fleury

and his staff on the results. The LCA is working with a professor at the University of Ottawa who is designing a template for our use. The audit will last two hours. Volunteers are welcome. To express interest, please send an e-mail to info@lowertown-basseville.ca.

- **Ottawa River Clean-Up:** This is being done in partnership with the Ottawa Rowing Club. The clean-up will be on June 9 behind Parliament. The Rowing Club is hosting a BBQ afterward. Send an e-mail to info@lowertown-basseville.ca if you would like to participate.
- **Emerald Ash Borer:** Working on a community nut tree and emerald ash borer tour for the fall.
- **Heritage Update / Mise à jour héritage (Liz MacKenzie and Nancy Miller-Chenier)**
 - **Union du Canada Building:** The Heritage Committee is looking at applying for individual designation of the Union du Canada building, which has a storied past and is a monument to francophone commerce and cultural success.
 - **PPS Report:** The Committee looked for heritage elements in the report, and are now looking for ways to increase the heritage profile of buildings in the Byward Market, such as through self-guided tours. They are looking at public spaces, such as George Street and the market building, and are looking for opportunities for animation in those areas.
 - **Rideau Street Renewal:** The Committee has provided input on the final design of the historic elements.
 - **Jules Morin Park:** had the first public square in Ottawa so the Committee is working on the park redevelopment.
 - **Macdonald Gardens:** working on historical elements.
 - **Lowertown East:** The Committee is making a heritage inventory to determine which elements should be protected.
 - Also working on walking tours, recording oral histories, and individual house histories.
 - The Committee received a Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française grant from the University of Ottawa of \$5,000 toward their work.
- **Bingham Park revitalization / Revitalisation du parc Bingham (Mike Kirkpatrick)**
 - The Committee is waiting for the person re-designing the park to share the designs. Mike representatives from the Chance Foundation will be meeting with designer. The Foundation has extended the deadline for spending the funds. Councillor Fleury also provided a \$1,000 grant toward the park.
- **Safety and Security Update / Mise à jour de sûreté et de sécurité (Norman Moyer)**
 - Asked if there were any concerns residents would like brought to the BIA Safety and Security meeting?
 - Inside versus outside speakers: liability issue and noise issue. We need to have a holistic response to these kinds of public space issues.
 - Concern expressed about big trucks on York and Nelson. These streets are not meant for that kind of traffic. They arrive early in the morning and leave late at night (noisy). It is happening because Rideau Street is closed for construction.
 - More drug trafficking noticed behind the Nile restaurant. Police want to know if their enforcement work in the Byward Market is pushing drugs into residential area.
 - Aggressive panhandlers: call police regularly but they are still there. BIA Ambassadors try to keep panhandlers moving and keep statistics on them. They call 911 if panhandlers are aggressive.

- **Homelessness Task Force Update / Mise à jour Les Sans-abris (Leah Fleetwood)**
 - Homelessness Stakeholders Roundtable: City staff are working on draft ten year plan to end homelessness. The Task Force has the draft document and will provide comments. There is a roundtable meeting on May 22 to discuss. Task Force will include an update on this in the next e-newsletter. The final report will be tabled in June. This meeting is being framed as a consultation on the report but is not really sufficiently inclusive of the community to be considered consultation.
 - The Task Force has visited all shelters in Lowertown, as well as Options Bytown and a women's shelter. They've also spoken with people in the community about the issue.
 - If anyone would like to provide comments, please send them to info@lowertown-basseville.ca and they will be shared with the Task Force members.
 - Lowertown will be most impacted by some upcoming shelter policy changes, which include an end to per capita funding and re-directing more money will into housing. The shelter executive directors have all recently resigned over this change. In addition, the province will be providing basic allowances on a monthly instead of weekly basis and homeless people will be expected to budget. If residents see impacts of these changes, please inform the LCA via info@lowertown-basseville.ca
 - Question: is anyone tracking the number of affordable housing spaces lost through vacancy and redevelopment? The current wait time for affordable housing is about seven years. Suggestion that the LCA ask City housing staff to keep track of the number of affordable spaces being lost.

- 6. **Special Feature / Présentation Spéciale:**
 - **King Edward Avenue Task Force Update / Mise à jour du groupe de travail de l'avenue King Edward (Michel Vallée)**
 - **King Edward Avenue (KEA) construction:** there will be no maintenance on the median, replacement of the planter or grass, or light fixtures.
 - The KEA Task Force submitted a report to the City on traffic calming and increased pedestrian safety methods.
 - They are working on traffic calming measures on the east side by Bruyere Street.
 - They have requested to remove the bus lane on the west side of the road: no need for it.
 - Cyclist lanes have been requested on either side of the road, or at least a line.
 - OC Transpo thinks the arrangement for a dedicated bus lane on KEA is permanent but the Task Force understood this was not necessarily the case.
 - **Interprovincial Truck Crossing:** There is a consultation coming up on this. Action Sandy Hill and the KEA Task Force have not stated an opinion on the new bridge location for the past few years but they may now need to take position.
 - The bridge will have to go in someone's backyard. Madeleine Meilleur is opposed to the Kettle Island location.
 - **Reconstruction of the Macdonald Cartier Bridge:** the Quebec Government is more involved than Ontario. The KEA Task Force is advocating for traffic calming and there seems to be a willingness to consider these ideas.

- 7. **Events – Updates / Événements – Mise à jour:**
 - **Membership Drive / Recrutement de nouveaux membres (Vera Etches)**

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- Instead of a regular meeting in June, the LCA will have social and physical activity: we will meet at the Routhier Centre and then pair up and have a membership drive. This will involve going door-to-door to meet people and collect their e-mail addresses for our membership list. The focus will likely be on Lowertown east, as we have fewer members in this area.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm

Membership Drive is 10 June / Le recrutement de nouveaux membres aura lieu le 10 juin