

**Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa-Carleton
Minutes - Board Meeting of May 26, 2008
St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, 2112 Bel-Air Drive**

ATTENDEES:

Archie Campbell [Dalhousie CA] chair, Bob Brocklebank [Glebe CA], Andrea Campbell [Leslie Park CA], Lorne Cutler [Hampton-Iona CA], Roland Dorsay [Island Park CA], John Forsey [Manor Park CA], Stephen Haines [Old Ottawa South CA], Annie Hall [Copeland Park CA], Linda Hoad [Hintonburg CA], Amy Kempster [Greenspace Alliance], Daniel Koepke [Island Park CA], Craig MacAulay [Lynwood Village (Bells Corners) CA], Tobi Nussbaum [Lindenlea CA], Christian Pupp [Old Ottawa East CA], Tom Rodda [Manor Park CA], Peter Runia [Cityview CA], John Stevenson [CfSC], Don Stewart [Westboro Beach CA], Agnes Warda [Glens CA],

GUESTS:

Sol Shuster [Coalition to protect the Greenbelt], Pamela Cooper [resident, Copeland Park]

Introductions

Annie Hall presented a short introduction to Copeland Park. The neighbourhood is primarily residential, including condos and apartments. Most of the area was built in the 60's. St. Michaels & All Angels church is in the Bel-Air neighbourhood rather than in Copeland Park but Copeland Park is included in their parish boundaries.

1. Approval of agenda

Additional items added under new business were: protection of the Greenbelt; development on Main St.; and the zoning by-law

2. Minutes of the April 8 meeting

Moved by Don Stewart, seconded by Stephen Haines that the draft minutes be adopted. Carried.

3. Business arising from the minutes

a) Membership outreach

Contact was reported with Navan. The suggestion was made that FCA should attempt to hold a meeting in the east of the city.

b) Transportation working group

In the absence of John Blatherwick there was no report but the submission sent by the transportation working group was circulated.

c) Laurentian HS and possible CDP

Annie Hall reported that Councillor Chiarelli is carrying to Council the proposal for a CDP to include the Laurentian site, the associated Merivale triangle, and further down Merivale TBD. Peter Runia noted that City View is also interested in the prospect of a CDP and that the intent is not to present obstacles to a specific development such as Walmart, but rather to have a proper planning process for the area, including seeking community views.

Linda Hoad mentioned that there is a case involving Walmart in Toronto in a community called Leslieville. Lorne Cutler commented that the Toronto case involves conversion of employment lands to commercial uses which is distinct from the Laurentian/Merivale case.

Don Stewart commented that this again involves policies on the sale of school land and how new uses should be applied such a tax-supported asset .

d) Official plan review

Amy Kempster commented that discussion was underway about country lot estates. This led to discussion about the FCA appeal on this aspect of the 2003 Official Plan and whether the FCA has a policy stance on the topic in the context of the current review. It was suggested that a specific position should not be taken at that meeting because rural members were unrepresented for the discussion.

A series of meetings under the title “intensification forum” were described, including a by-invitation workshop to be held on June 7. The four themes for that workshop are to be: design culture, tall buildings, creating a collaborative environment, and sustainable suburbia. Comments were made about interest in participation as well as about canyon effects and wind issues for tall buildings.

There was a question about earlier communication on concerns about the development approvals process. It was explained that in talks with the Planning Dept. which led in part to the current consultations centring on the Official Plan, it had also been suggested that communities set out their issues about the approvals process, leading to a meeting with Planning managers. No documentation on such concerns had been received as yet.

e) FCA website

Some of the links are not working.

f) Membership dues update

Eleven or twelve associations which have traditionally been members have not yet paid their fees for the year.

g) NCC consultations on Rideau & Sussex intersection

A meeting was held on May 6 and all the proposals presented seem to involve filling in the underpass for pedestrians. One idea is to create a traffic circle. Peter Runia noted that the present underpass only provides limited access for pedestrians – it goes under the turning lane only and there is a level crossing across Col By Drive. It was also observed that the reconstruction of the Congress Centre calls for the narrowing of Col By Drive which further complicates the intersection.

It was suggested that a link be put on the website leading to the five options for the intersection.

h) Property tax reform

There was discussion about the request for associations to fix appointments with their Councillor so that the FCA proposal on property taxes could be explained. Lorne Cutler requested that news of appointments be sent to him. Andrea Campbell said Leslie Park is interested.

i) Strategic lawsuits against public participation update

Archie Campbell explained that SLAPP is usually threat of a countersuit for costs designed to discourage community groups. In the USA and Australia there is legislation to prevent such actions against community groups. The provincial government is being lobbied on the matter. Sol Shuster said that the issue of costs was of concern for the Friends of Leitrim. Their lawyer had advised that it was unlikely but the concerns remained. Shuster said legislation would be important.

Don Stewart commented that even if costs are ultimately rejected, it is still expensive to fight such an action.

4. New business

a) Presentation on the Ottawa Cycling Plan

John Stevenson circulated a letter from the Citizens for Safe Cycling. He noted that CfSC was pleased that the cycling plan was at last being brought to Council. It is a thick document but worth reading. He mentioned that cycling does not only benefit the participant, it also benefits motorists through reduced congestion.

In discussion there were questions about the rural component of the plan and whether it was deficient in its treatment of cyclists' needs downtown. Stevenson said CfSC would welcome support for the plan associated with the comment that a more ambitious plan would have been better.

aa) Coalition to protect the Greenbelt

Sol Shuster invited associations and the FCA to join a coalition to protect the Greenbelt. He noted that there had been a similar coalition regarding the NCC renewal which had produced a 45 page brief. Some of the coalition's views on land designations and processes had been reflected in the mandate review report.

He said another coalition had focussed on development in Gatineau Park and it was gratifying to hear that the NCC is buying the lands which otherwise would have been developed.

In April the NCC had announced a review of its Master Plan. This led 12 environmental groups to form the coalition. At the moment there are no community associations in the coalition. For the moment there are no fees to join.

Don Stewart asked if the Greenbelt included greenspaces along the Ottawa River and the response was no.

Agnes Warda commented that her community, the Glens, is in the Greenbelt.

Shuster noted that the NCC board had passed the airport master plan which allows business parks and that extraction areas were permitted in 1996. On June 12 the city is to issue a paper on development in the Greenbelt. The NCC time frame for changes would be over several years. Moved by Amy Kempster and seconded by Tom Rodda that the FCA become involved in the coalition. CARRIED

Agnes Warda agreed to act as initial contact point with the coalition.

b) Interprovincial bridge crossings

John Forsey reported that meetings had been held in February. The consultants are not making

public the factors they are assigning to various factors in rating the different proposals. Further consultations are to take place June 17 and 18. It is expected that the weightings will be released at that time. In September or October it is expected that the two preferred corridors - one east and one west - will be announced.

c) Purchase of service agreements between the city and community groups

It was hoped that representatives from Canterbury would speak to this issue but none were present. It was observed that Canterbury has arranged for a special tax supplement (a local improvement charge) for their community centre.

d) F.U.N. Update

Archie Campbell moved that \$200 in expenses be approved for his and Amy Kempster's attendance at the FUN AGM. Seconded by Bob Brocklebank. Carried.

Amy Kempster said that the lawyer who spoke to the FUN meeting had very useful advice for community groups considering appearance before the OMB. This material is on the FUN website. Archie Campbell mentioned that the lawyer had advised that community groups can question the credentials of the experts presented by the other (often well-funded) side.

e) FCA Annual General Meeting

Archie Campbell said the meeting is set for Monday June 23 at City Hall. Members for the 2008-2009 Executive will be sought.

f) Development on Main Street

Christian Pupp described a project on Main Street, which is designated a traditional mainstreet in the Official Plan. The developer, Properties Group, had proposed a 7-storey building. The community was engaged in a CDP process and requested that the developer conform to the new zoning by-law which would allow six storeys. The developer agreed and sought a variance to the FSI (floor space index). The community association agreed with the developer as part of the compromise and the Councillor wrote a supportive letter to that effect to the Committee of Adjustment.

At the last moment a group in the neighbourhood organized demanding that a maximum of four storeys be allowed. The Committee of Adjustment rejected the variance of the FSI and the developer has appealed to the OMB.

Now the position of the community association has shifted. The people objecting to the project now hold sway in the association. As a result the association is now supporting the Committee of Adjustment rejection of the variance. The OMB hearing is to be held the following Thursday and Friday.

Stephen Haines commented that community associations need to work with developers to get what they want in their communities. He cited a case in which a developer came forward early in his thinking and was not well received by the community association.

Linda Hoad said it is best to have the association planning committee have the initial meeting with developers. This arrangement permitted compromises to be struck leading to the project that brought the Great Canadian Theatre Company to Hintonburg.

g) Zoning by-law

Christian Pupp noted that the latest version of the by-law allows for a parking garage on the ground floor of a building on a traditional mainstreet as long as the first three metres of the ground floor from the street are for activities engaging the pedestrian (shops etc.). He questioned whether any meaningful activity could be accommodated in such a shallow depth.

Others indicated they were unaware of the provision. There was some discussion about the uncertain state of the by-law and whether it comes fully into effect on June 25.

h) Greenspace Alliance

Moved by Christian Pupp, seconded by Don Stewart that the FCA renew its (reciprocal) membership in the Greenspace Alliance. Carried.

5. Adjournment