

Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa-Carleton
Minutes – Board Meeting of Monday October 19, 2009
North Gloucester Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 2036 Ogilvie Road

Participants:

Archie Campbell [Dalhousie CA - chair], Bob Brocklebank [Glebe CA], Lorne Cutler [Hampton Iona Community Group], Rick Devereux [Centretown Citizens' CA], Annie Hall [Copeland Park CA], Linda Hoad [Hintonburg CA], Michael Horne [Vanier CA], Amy Kempster [Greenspace Alliance], Michael Kostiuk [Carlington CA], Judy Makin [March Rural CA], Paul McConnell [New Edinburgh Community Alliance], Will Murray [Centretown Citizens' CA], James O'Grady [Trend-Arlington CA], Heather Pearl [Champlain Park CA], Sheila Perry [Community Council of Overbrook], Iola Price [Rockcliffe Park RA], Cam Robertson [Dow's Lake RA & City Centre Coalition], Tom Rodda [Manor Park CA], Graeme Roderick [Tanglewood-Hillsdale CA], David Sacks [New Edinburgh Community Alliance], Debbie St.Aubin [Vanier CA], John Stevenson [Citizens for Safe Cycling], Don Stewart [Westboro Beach CA], Brian Tansley [West Manotick CA], Agnes Warda [Glens CA], Bruce Webster [Rural Council of Ottawa-Carleton]

1. Approval of agenda

Items were added to the draft agenda under New Business as follows: (b) Budget consultations (c) Rethink Ottawa (d) 40 km/h in residential areas

2. Approval of minutes of September 22, 2009

Adoption moved by Bruce Webster, seconded by Iola Price CARRIED

3. Business arising from the minutes

a) Official Plan

Don Stewart opened discussion by referring to the issue of Manotick and the plan to build suburbs outside the urban boundary. He called for an approach to the province noting that the Provincial Policy Statement is being undermined by the Ontario Municipal Board.

Bruce Webster noted that there is already an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) from Mattamy with staff regarding Richmond. He said that the City adopted the revised OP and the OPA immediately came forward. He commented that this makes a mockery of the OP. He said there is no obligation to extend infrastructure to Richmond whereas in the case of Manotick some \$30 million was spent by the City. In Richmond there is city water and the sewer system will need to be upgraded at a cost of \$40 to 50 million to serve a developer. There is no further expansion possible – the village boundary is defined.

Amy Kempster commented that developers are to pay through the Development Charges. Only projects on the DC list are to be covered. If something is to happen in Richmond, it would need to be added to the list. Bruce Webster said the DC's were brought in to build the social network, roads, transit and libraries but now the developers are allowed to front-end the DC's. In fact the City uses the revenue to pay off previous developments. Amy Kempster observed that the legislation demands a 10% deduction from anticipated costs for transit and social development. The biggest item is roads.

Don Stewart called for a letter to Minister Watson and Council calling for respect for the OP. Iola Price commented that one problem is the appearance of City staff before the OMB in support of decisions undermining the OP. Brian Tansley said the OMB role is before the Courts. He said Minister Watson has not addressed the problem, claiming that this is an issue for the Solicitor-General.

Linda Hoad said the revised OP is not in effect; the Minister must approve and it is now just Council policy. Bruce Webster commented that the provisions on urban wetlands might give rise to appeals, further delayed the effect of part of the revised OP.

Brian Tansley observed that the revision of the OP is number 76, meaning that there had been 75 amendments subsequent to adoption in 2003. Linda Hoad commented that the Council had done its work but the actions of developers are undermining the OP. Bruce Webster commented that North Gower is probably the next village to face pressure. Brian Tansley said the findings of the Hemson report provided the financial argument for intensification. Michael Kostiuk noted that VIA is doubling rail infrastructure in Richmond, providing further indication of expansion.

Don Stewart moved, seconded by Amy Kempster that the FCA send a letter to the province questioning OMB decisions which override the direction of the City's Official Plan and of the Provincial Policy Statement, and calling for the province to take action to further strengthen the definitive nature of the two policy documents. CARRIED with Graeme Roderick dissenting.

b) Membership outreach

Vanier was welcomed as a new participant since formation of their association. It was noted that a rep from Beacon Hill had intended to come. Bruce Webster suggested that an approach be made to Glen Cairn seeking their participation. Judy Makin of March Rural was welcomed.

Agnes Warda commented that the city has difficulty in delivering info to Community Associations because their records are not always up-to-date. James O'Grady inquired whether the FCA website allowed associations to update their own information. Lorne Cutler said there are 14 groups who should be encouraged to renew their membership. Graeme Roderick asked if it would be possible to have a more developed schedule for FCA meetings so it was possible to arrange other commitments around FCA meetings.

c) Lansdowne Park redevelopment

Bob Brocklebank noted that the public consultations on Lansdowne had attracted a high number of citizens. He said the Glebe association had warned the City of the concerns and doubts about open house events expressed at the September FCA meeting.

Bruce Webster said that it would be best if the public delegations were heard before the staff presentation occurs.

Rick Devereux reported that Centretown is holding a meeting the following Wednesday at which Lansdowne will be a topic. He said CCA has a meeting with the City Manager on Lansdowne. The association's position has been that sole sourcing and the process followed are of concern.

But he said the degree of public engagement is positive. After the proposed partnership is cancelled he hopes that the FCA can be part of the consultation process.

Amy Kempster said that Council had set up the process as it was. There is a move for change but some Councillors are fixed in their views. Lorne Cutler pointed out it is City property and said he would be concerned if the FCA tried to come up with its own vision for the property. Instead he felt emphasis should be on going back to a proper process. Brian Tansley said there is a need to get associations' members involved; the problem has been a lack of imagination.

Lorne Cutler wondered if citizens want to pay for the project and thus if the City is prepared to pay. Will Murray noted that other arrangements could open the possibility of funding from senior governments. Rick Devereux said the lack of support from other levels of government was a strong argument to present to the public. Graeme Roderick underscored the importance of funding as an issue in the public discussion of the project.

Brian Tansley said the project is contrary to the spirit of the Official Plan. Linda Hoad cautioned about becoming too specific about the desired plan for redevelopment and said it was important to open up a competition.

James O'Grady said he wanted the Lansdowne Live proposal to continue and to be a contender in an eventual competition. He said the City must establish what is to be done and issue an appropriate Request for Proposals.

Bob Brocklebank described the idea of having an FCA letter which would be co-signed by some prominent developers indicating that they would be interested in competing if the City opened up the project for bids. Lorne Cutler said this would only have an impact if we did secure the public endorsement of some credible developers. Talks with developers would be conducted to try to structure a public event.

d) Recreation Master Plan

Sheila Perry noted that FCA had a presentation on the Master Plan by Diane Huffman. A survey has been available online and a report is to come forward in mid-November. So far there have been over 600 responses to the survey. A survey on recreation needs of the 50 plus portion of the population is active to the end of the week.

Amy Kempster commented that the needs of the 50 to 65 year old group are distinct from the older citizens. Sheila Perry responded that such input is valuable and that there is a paper from the Seniors Advisory Group. Budget documents are to be released on Oct. 22 and Advisory Committees will need to respond.

Sheila Perry said the principles for recreation which are emerging and for which support is sought include:

- availability to everyone
- community centres as hub of communities

- budgets should reflect importance of program
- an inventory and needs assessment is required
- guidelines are needed for sponsorship.

Linda Hoad said the issue of affordability should be added; subsidies are not sufficient. Lorne Cutler asked about the Dovercourt example where the running of the facility is contracted out and he asked if this was poorly received by the City. Sheila Perry said the City says it wants to encourage partnerships.

John Stevenson noted that there are many active retirees in Ottawa who should be considered in planning recreation programs. Don Stewart said the Westboro Beach association would like to have the beach lifeguarding transferred from the City to the Dovercourt Recreation Association, so that the personnel could be effectively employed when the beaches are closed to swimming.

Bruce Webster said he agrees with the idea of communities running their own community centres. In Richmond he felt that the three permanent city employees drove up costs. Another example cited was the changeover of the Rockcliffe library from largely volunteer driven to a staffed facility. He said that this tendency makes recreation unnecessarily expensive – ice time in arenas as an example.

Iola Price said the Rockcliffe concern is with the idea that one size fits all. There should be a variation in facilities depending on the community. Amy Kempster commented that the City likes big centres rather than small facilities, but the small centres are needed throughout the communities.

On the budget process, Rick Devereux said that as a member of the Arts Advisory Committee the process seems short. You get to see a first draft, no changes are permitted.

On recreation, Don Stewart called for planning with a view to future needs. Bob Brocklebank asked whether facilities of other organizations such as the Y or the Boys & Girls Club figure into the Recreation Plan. Sheila Perry said an inventory of resources in communities is needed. Lorne Cutler asked about the school boards and Sheila Perry indicated that some boards seem more open than others.

e) FCA website

Bob Brocklebank said he proposed to post to the FCA website the presentation Brian Tansley had given to the Committee of the Ontario Legislature. James O'Grady asked if there had been consideration given to using content management software for the site.

f) Water rates

Agnes Warda said that there is a general review of water, sewer and wastewater. Much of the concern comes from the rural areas. Discussion has centred on a concept that some who do not pay water rates are receiving some municipal services without paying for them. However in such cases most drainage issues are downloaded to property owners. This has left rural residents

questioning whether they receive much in services for taxes paid. It was uncertain what exactly the capital tax levy covers and whether all taxpayers should similarly be subject to it. There is some support for one of the Options presented in which rural ditches are transferred from wastewater to road works.

Agnes Warda and Bruce Webster called for FCA support for rural residents in removal of sewer charges from their tax burden. There was discussion which led to questions of the Hemson report in which differences of service levels and infrastructure provision.

g) Development charges
No discussion

h) Meetings on City property

Michael Kostiuk reported that Carlington has worked out its problem of use of community facilities for executive meetings. Bruce Webster noted in his community the cost for a meeting room was \$8 per hour. He said that for the past meeting of FCA, Councillor Qadri had paid for the meeting room. He recommended that Councillors be invited to FCA meetings, not as a source of funding, but as a general principle.

6. New business

a) Tree By-law application in rural areas

Judy Makin described a problem in her community in which a property owner was engaged in clear cutting. This property was partly natural features area and partly wetland. The property owner said he was creating a private driving range. The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority said it could do little and the Councillor the same.

Amy Kempster commented that there is little protection in the Official Plan. Bruce Webster said only the Ministry of Natural Resources can take action. Iola Price said there is no enforcement of regulations protecting trees. Amy Kempster noted that the old OP is still in force; it has little to protect rural natural features. However she suggested when applications are made for development there would be an applicable process.

Iola Price said that following the 2001 “tree massacre” and with the Cardinal Creek issue, there was a proposal for a rural tree by-law. There could also be a site alteration by-law. Bruce Webster said that originally there had been talk of a one-size-fits-all by-law but there was such push back from rural property owners that the by-law became urban-only. The problem was to find a way to make it equitable to all.

Don Stewart wondered if a process to licence commercial operators harvesting wood might be considered. Will Murray asked about discussion of the independence of an environmental commissioner.

b) Budget consultations

Documents were circulated which had explained the procedures to Advisory Committees. It was uncertain when the public was to be informed.

Lorne Cutler observed that in the past details were only provided on items which were being put forward for budget cuts, whereas the majority of city expenditure was not made known in detail. Will Murray suggested FCA should position itself to make comments on the budget.

c) Rethink Ottawa

James O'Grady said it is proposed that a forum on city governance be held. The Carleton Landowners' Association has three meetings planned which could lead to such a forum. He asked that FCA support such a forum and commented that he saw governance as a city-wide issue for the 2010 municipal election.

Linda Hoad said the Hintonburg association has talked of the need for an Urban Affairs Committee. Cam Robertson spoke in favour of FCA support for such a forum.

Rick Devereux said that, as a governance question, efforts are being made to organize the Advisory Committees to work together on the budget process.

d) 40 km/h in residential areas

Iola Price said that the concept went to the Transportation Committee and disposition was a recommendation that streets with 60% support for a speed reduction should be granted. Heather Pearl asked if incidence of accidents should not be also a factor in such a decision. David Sacks asked whether the recommendation would be before Council the following week.

e) Cost of FUN Annual General Meeting

Lorne Cutler noted that the costs for the FUN AGM, hosted by FCA, were higher than expected and Archie Campbell has footed higher costs.

It was moved by Graeme Roderick and seconded by Rick Devereux that Archie Campbell be reimbursed for costs associated with the FUN Annual General Meeting from FCA funds or from other sources. CARRIED.

Adjournment