

**Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa-Carleton
Minutes -- Board Meeting of November 25, 2009
Trend-Arlington Community Centre, 50 Bellman Drive**

Participants: Archie Campbell [Dalhousie CA] [chair]; Metin Akgun [Stittsville Village Assn]; Bob Brocklebank [Glebe CA]; Lorne Cutler [Hampton-Iona Community Group]; Rick Devereux [Centretown Citizens' CA]; Don Ford [Woodpark CA]; Michael Kostiuk [Carlington CA]; Stewart Kronberg [Trend-Arlington CA]; Michael Larass [New Edinburgh Community Alliance]; Craig MacAulay [Lynwood Village Assn]; Judy Makin [March Rural CA]; Kathryn McCallion [Action Sandy Hill]; Paul McConnell [New Edinburgh C All]; James O'Grady [Trend-Arlington CA]; Katie Paris [West Wellington CA]; Sheila Perry [Community Council of Overbrook]; Christian Pupp [Old Ottawa East CA]; Cam Robertson [Dow's Lake Residents' Assn]; Graeme Roderick [Tanglewood-Hillsdale CA]; Peter Runia [City View CA]; David Sacks [New Edinburgh C All]; Marjorie Shaver-Jones [Copeland Park CA]; John Stevenson [Citizens for Safe Cycling]; Anna Sundin [Old Ottawa South CA]; Rick Van Loon [West Wellington CA]

Guests: Dave Butler [Ottawa Stadium Group], Diane Huffman [City of Ottawa]; Duncan Macdonald [Ottawa Stadium Group]

1. Approval of agenda

The draft agenda was modified by the deletion of the item "Rethink Ottawa forum" and by the addition of "Exclusion of associations from community events" and "CAFES"

2. Meeting Schedule for January to May 2010

In order to develop a plan for future meetings it was agreed that Carlington would try to host in January, Glebe and Westboro Beach would work for February and March, Tanglewood would book for April and New Edinburgh would do the same for May.

3. Approval of minutes of October 19, 2009

Graeme Roderick noted an error in the minutes regarding reimbursement of the President for costs associated with the FUN AGM. With that change, it was moved by Michael Kostiuk and seconded by Rick Devereux that the minutes be adopted. CARRIED.

4. Business arising from the minutes

a) Official Plan

Archie Campbell reported that work is proceeding on a draft letter on issues arising from the OMB decision on Manotick. The Courts ruled against the City but two judges commented that the language of Bill 51 was not useful.

b) Membership outreach

Rick Devereux reported that he continued to contact various prospective returning and new members.

c) Lansdowne Park redevelopment

Bob Brocklebank reported on the decision by Council to proceed with the Lansdowne Partnership Plan by conducting various studies with the issue returning to Council in June.

Peter Runia asked whether it is legal to benefit a small group and he commented that it seems an example of improper expenditure. He called for a stronger position and suggested liaison with the Ottawa Taxpayer Group. Christian Pupp noted that George Dark, the design advisor to be retained by the City, supports intensification. James O'Grady commented that the key to the controversy is the process followed by the City. Graeme Roderick asked if the FCA was prepared to take a position or if we should be urging member associations to adopt a point of view. Don Stewart asked if it is appropriate for the City to use such projects as a means to stimulate the economy. Katie Paris said questions in the debate must be carefully crafted because this is portrayed as a public investment. Peter Runia commented that the same applied to the proposed central library project. Michael Kostiuk noted that only conditional approval has been given to the Lansdowne project and he wondered if workshops could be organized. Kathryn McCallion spoke of the need to keep the pressure on and to remind Councillors of the public interest. She suggested using the budget debate as a means to this end and she commented that it seems easy for Council to raise taxes but difficult to engage in meaningful decision-making.

d) Recreation Master Plan

Diane Huffman noted the City has received multiple responses on behalf of various community organizations. This will be reported to Community and Protective Services Committee on December 3. On Dec. 9 the report is to go to Council. It is worth noting that over 50% of the budget is derived from revenues (as opposed to taxes) and a policy is needed for subsidization for those who cannot afford the user fees. Another issue is how to deal with child care as recreation.

Peter Runia asked about inequality among neighbourhoods. Ms. Huffman agreed that a review is needed and that this inventory must go beyond just city facilities. She said that the previous municipalities had divergent standards for their programs. She expected that assessments will be initiated by the City with communities in looking at recreation availability. Bob Brocklebank reported that there had recently been a presentation by SPACE, an Ontario-wide group interested in community access to public spaces, initially schools but also any publicly-owned facility. He also mentioned the complaints heard at an earlier FCA meeting in Greely about communities faced with changing access conditions following amalgamation. In reply it was noted that the Master Plan is intended to produce a framework for decision-making, not to spell out solutions to all issues. It is acknowledged that each community is different and working out all the issues will take time. On outdoor rinks, there is no specific change proposed by the master plan so far. Don Stewart suggested that advertising on the boards around rinks might supplement revenue needs.

e) FCA website

Links will be posted to West Wellington blogs and material is also available from Carlington.

f) 2010 city budget

Rick Devereux noted that the public interest group Our Ottawa is holding a panel discussion on the city budget on December 7. The group had earlier held a meeting on city governance proposals.

Kathryn McCallion noted that each Standing Committee of Council is making a proposal for its portion of the city budget. The police budget is an example in which the perceived needs of the specific area of responsibility are set forth with little concern for the budget envelope as a whole. Peter Runia asked if some relationship between the overall budget and rates of inflation could be established as a principle. Don Stewart asked if the process for 2010 repeats experience of the past in which the discussion centres around a small portion of the operating budget only, rather than involving a coordinated look at the full range of city activity. Graeme Roderick asked for ideas on action which could be taken. Bob Brocklebank observed that there is a plan for a series of public consultations and one action is to encourage communities to participate.

Don Stewart moved, seconded by Graeme Roderick, that:
a committee be established to examine the city budget documents, that the committee make recommendations to the FCA board, and that if consultations occur prior to the next FCA meeting, that the committee send delegations to the consultations. CARRIED

Marjorie Shaver-Jones noted that public delegations would be heard by the Council sitting as Committee of the Whole on January 25 through 27. Kathryn McCallion urged that a city-wide vision on the budget be developed for presentation.

5. New business

a) Regulations on building height and grade

David Sacks and Michael Larass outlined concerns about a project on Putnam Ave. in which a means seems to have been discovered to build beyond height permitted in the zoning by-law. Apparently the height is measured from the “builder’s grade” which is not natural grade. Paul McConnell explained this has meant that by heaping soil around the building a higher structure has been permitted than had been anticipated when approval was granted. There was a belief that in construction a layer of shale was encountered and whole building was “raised” to avoid construction complications. Michael Larass said there is a “grading inspector” but this seems to involve drainage rather than any consideration of the grade prior to construction. David Sacks said this seems to be a loophole built into the bylaw and should be considered by the FCA.

Cam Robertson asked if the grade concept came from the building code. Katie Paris said this similar to a project of semis on Wellington. Judy Makin noted there was an issue of raising the grade in a project in Morgan’s Grant. Kathryn McCallion said that for infill projects the height seems to be measured from the highest land. Metin Akgun suggested this is a problem of imprecision in the by-laws. Peter Runia said the more fundamental question is respect for streetscape. Don Stewart wondered if this loophole would be exploited whenever soil conditions proved troublesome. Michael Kostiuk suggested by-law officers had limited interest in enforcing such rules as building height.

b) Community development framework

Michael Kostiuk said this is a city initiative to try to bring all the service providers in an area together. There is an extensive needs analysis and survey. However meetings are held during the

day when many volunteer organizations find difficulty in participating and the churches do not seem to be included.

Marjorie Shaver-Jones asked if this is to be followed by a Community Design Plan. Lorne Cutler said there was a workshop on the Community Development Framework in September and four neighbourhoods were targeted for this project. Archie Campbell said this city project seems to be driven by the provincial government.

c) Changes to Municipal Elections Act

The FUN paper proposing changes was circulated. Archie Campbell said that some of the points in the paper have been adopted by the provincial government in the bill before the Legislature, but the issue of corporate and union donations has not been touched. Rick Devereux noted that even in jurisdictions in which the donations from corporations or unions are prohibited, individuals associated with corporations or unions could continue to make donations. Don Stewart said corporations and unions should be banned from passing money to individuals for the purpose of making political donations.

d) Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Bob Brocklebank noted that COVO organizes various conferences, including one on the forthcoming municipal election. He suggested that FCA might wish to become a members of COVO.

e) Revitalization of the Ottawa Baseball Stadium

Dave Butler and Duncan Macdonald from Ottawa Stadium Group said that they had been encouraged by the Community Council of Overbrook in proceeding to make a proposal to the City for use of the stadium. The concept is to use the stadium for pro baseball and entertainment. Mr. Macdonald noted that Ottawa produces ball players and bats so it should be able to support a team. The idea is to incur no cost to the City and work with community organizations such as the Food Bank and community soccer leagues. For transport it is planned to run shuttles from Train station on the Transitway. Game tickets are proposed to be valid for transit use.

Rick Devereux asked about proposed league associations. The response was that there is an independent league with teams in Calgary, Edmonton, and Victoria. Peter Runia asked about cost to the City and why this attempt is expected to be successful. In reply it was noted that the Lynx schedule called for multiple games in a row which was not well received by fans. In addition it is planned to emphasize cross-promotion with other interests (pizza, golf and skiing as examples) to generate attendance. Questions were raised about weather and it was indicated that there would be weather guarantees with validity for a subsequent game. It would be necessary to make sure the stadium is used for other events, not just baseball to have a viable proposal.

f) Future rural rail transport

Michael Kostiuk reported that he had attended a conference on rural transport organized by Transport Action (formerly Transport 2000). At the meeting there was mention of specific possibilities for rail and bus transport initiatives in Eastern Ontario. Material from the meeting will be made available for posting on the FCA website. Interesting information from the meeting

included the fact that abandoned rail land does not pay taxes and that years ago Beacon Hill had organized their own bus service, leading to an NFB film "A bus for us".

g) Exclusion of associations from community events

Michael Kostiuk reported there was a weekend event held in his ward under the title "Building Community Capacity Program". The event was billed as open to residents and service providers and the ward Councillor is appointing members of committees to work on the program. For some reason the community association is seen as having no role in this initiative.

h) CAFES

Rick Devereux noted that this organization parallels the FCA (in that it has representation from community groups) and is focussed on environmental sustainability. The next CAFES meeting is to be hosted by Centretown in January or February. Associations with environment committees or similar interests may wish to participate.

Adjournment