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**Annual General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 7:30 pm**

**At the Swansea Town Hall**

**N.B.** This was an in person meeting.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Veronica Wynne, President, at 7:36 PM and Veronica thanked the attendees for coming and introduced the current Board. There were no conflicts of interest.

**Directors Present:** Veronica Wynne, William Roberts, Sybil Wilkinson, Janice Kaldor Sherrel Dhanpaul, and Nick Singh.

**Directors Absent with regrets:** Elizabeth Tsihlias

Guest Speaker: there was no guest speaker at this year’s AGM.

1. **Approval of agenda**: It was moved by William Roberts, seconded by Nicole Wineman to accept the agenda as presented. The motion was carried
2. **Approval of the Minutes for the AGM, December 8, 2022:** It was moved by Nicloe Wineman and seconded by Manfred Netzel to amend the 2023 Annual General Membership meeting minutes to ensure the correct date of that meeting. The motion was carried.
3. **Treasurer’s Report:** Nick Singh presented the treasurer’s report. He noted that because the AGM occurs before the end of the current year the Treasurers Report covers the12 months of the previous year, 2023.

He commented that the books are balanced once again and the Association had an opening balance of $19,410.25 and a closing balance of $20,700.56 at the end of 2023, a change of $1,290.31.

This was the result of two deposits from our 2022 and 2023 Fundraisers at the Village Playhouse being made in the same year. So really we are just covering our operating expenses.

The Big operating expenses was for insurance, $1361.01 which was up 30% over the previous year. We have not seen this year’s quote yet but we expect it to take another jump. We also paid $86 for our web presence. There were other smaller costs for photocopying and transaction fees and our membership in CORRA.  
  
It was moved by Nick Singh and seconded by Frank Tall to accept the Treasurer’s Report. The motion was carried.

1. **President’s Report:** Veronica Wynnenoted that it is the Association’s 95th official anniversary and we invite all to join us for cake and refreshments following the elections. Veronica gave a review of the years activities as follows.

Our annual fundraiser at the Village Players theatre was successful and raised about $1500.

We attended a City meeting on January 16th with other Resident Associations to discuss issues with the Committee of adjustment. There has been little improvement and problems continue. There will be a full report after the break.

Veronica Wynne reported that Bill 109 has reduced public consultation requirements and such reductions are a dangerous and ongoing concern.

The developers of 2461 Bloor St. W. originally proposed a 13 storey building (shown on screen) and have appealed the City’s approval of 10 storeys. We have received Party status at the OLT hearings and will be working to prevent a taller than 10 storey precedent. This is an expensive endeavour and we have started a Gofundme campaign to help with the cost and to help us with other expenses and we will be giving that more focus after the AGM.

There has been news of a plan to redevelop the Swansea Mews and we will be as involved as possible as this moves forward.

We will also be dealing as best as we can with the barrage of planning and policy changes that are coming from the Province and the City.

Some of our traffic safety issues on the South Kingsway have been addressed with the reduced speed limit and we will continue to pursue traffic lights at Ormskirk Ave.

We participated in the Swansea Public School graduation ceremonies and awarded several awards on behalf of the Association.

We mounted a campaign to alert the community to the changes proposed by the City’s Night Economy project and associated by-law changes.

The City is constantly making changes and the Association continues to participate in as many consultation meetings as possible.

In conclusion Veronica reminded everyone to renew their memberships and to join us for our annual fundraiser at the Village Player for their production of “Terror by Gaslight”

1. **Election of the Board of Directors:** Gary Norris introduced the 2024slate as follows:

PRESIDENT: Veronica Wynne

Vice President: Sybil Wilkinson

Secretary Treasurer: Nick Singh

Board Directors: Elizabeth Tslihas

Sherrel Dhanoaul

William Roberts

Janice Kalder

Nominations from the floor resulted in the addition of the following to the slate as Directors of the Board:

Nicole Wineman

Claire Cerzny

It was moved by Nicole Wineman and seconded by Sherrel Dhanpaul to close nominations. The motion was carried.

It was moved by Nicole Wineman and seconded by Sherrel Dhanpaul and to accept the amended slate.

Veronica Wynne declared the slate elected by acclamation.

It was moved by Rosemary Coombe and seconded by Frank Tall to give the Board Authority to fill any vacancies. The motion was carried.

1. **There was a break for cake and refreshments**

It was noted that in addition to the Association’s 95th official year it was also William Roberts’ 40th year as a board member of SARA

**Following the break a number of matters were presented in-depth.**

1. **Development proposal for 2461 Bloor St. W.**

Veronica Wynne reported that the application for 2461 Bloor St. W. was initially for 12 stories plus a rooftop amenity level making it a 13 storey building in our view. The City agreed with that view. At Community Council the application was approved for 10 stories which is at the top of what the planning documents say can be approved for this location. The developer has appealed the City’s decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal. With the help of $1000 from the Bloor West Village Residents Association, SARA applied for Party status and we are required to provide the OLT an issues list by October 30th.

The developer’s proposal offers reduced retail space and employment. The building will have a mechanical car storage type parking which because of operating requirements exempts the project from having visitor parking. This is building will set a height precedence that has impacts for the neighbourhood.

It was moved by William Roberts and seconded by Sybil Wilkinson for the Association/Group to oppose the appeal of the City’s decision.

1. **Bloor St. W. Avenue Study**

Veronica Wynne reported that the long running Avenue Study for our stretch of Bloor St. W. had been completed in 2018 and we were awaiting the resulting development criteria to be released. The City has suddenly decided to present, at Community Council on October 30th , a Character area at the east end of Bloor featuring a stepback at the third storey and unlimited height. And at the west end and Clendenan a stepback at 6 stories and then up from there.

It was moved by William Roberts and seconded by Frank Tall to oppose the increased height and density predetermined by the City as outcomes for the new Avenue Study.

1. **Swansea Mews**

Veronica Wynne reported that on hearing that federal money was being allotted to housing projects around the City she called the Councillor’s office to ask if Swansea Mews was going to be restored or replaced. She was told that it was far down on the list for consideration and that those who were evacuated would be allowed back if there was a fit between the new available units and the evacuated tenant. Since then a ruff proposal has appeared in the news but as of yet there is no notice of a serious proposal despite a possible demolition date of 2026.

It was mentioned that the ruff proposal included a dead-end street within the site and possible retail.

1. **The Committee of Adjustment**

Nick Singh provided the following overview. The Committee of Adjustment is still quite broken. As mentioned we had a city wide public meeting of resident associations with the City early in the year to discuss issues specific to the Committee of Adjustment.

One of the complaints was that the Committee members have no background with planning matters or with the legal questions. The answer was that the Planning Department has no control over who City Council sends them. So if they get a person with a history in social work that is who is on your committee.

The next problem is training. They get a total of three days.

So for Example we had three applications yesterday. One was for an oversized balcony in an area where there are no existing balconies never mind oversized ones. The bylaw says 4sqm. The application sought over 6 sqm. That is over 50% of what is permitted and there were five letters of objection from the surrounding Neighbours.

After our deputations the committee said I can‘t see any difference between 4sqm and 6 sqm and it was approved.

You have to question what is the purpose of a bylaw if is tossed aside with that kind of flippancy. It is no wonder that there is an explosion of applications. The committee will approve almost anything.

We used to be able to appeal these decisions, if there was money to do so but even that right of appeal has been taken away from us. As a result these entrenched injustices are rolling on week in and week out.

We have had a few cases where we were not even allowed to speak. In one case they said to one of our members that since the Association was making a presentation they could not speak. In another they just said “Oops we missed you so sorry too bad”. They do not even function by their own rules. It has becomes quite impossible to invoke the protections and stability that the By-Laws, the Official Plan and the Planning Act are supposed to provide to neighbourhoods.

We have been working with the Councillor‘s office for over a year and hopefully I will get a sit-down with Gord Perks soon and see if we can get some basic democratic rights put back into the process.

Frank Tall related the following. Contrary to the Committee of Adjustment’s own rules it permits the applicants to rely on new evidence in their rebuttals thus avoiding any comment on that new evidence. The applicant gets the last word according to the Committee’s rules. This is improper, for example if a prosecutor was allowed to claim that the defendant’s fingerprints were found on the gun and the defendant was not allowed to point out that the defendant was a double amputee with no hands there might well be a miscarriage of justice.

Mr Tall provided the example of 160 Morningside Ave. After the residents had spoken the developer returned and during his rebuttal discussed issues concerning drainage that had not been in evidence prior. Because residents are not allowed to comment further the evidence of the large rain runoff ditch that appeared as a result of the approved drainage basin was not allowed. Since there is no right of appeal this is a violation of the Charter protected right to fundamental fairness.

A complaint to the Director of Planning was answered with “There is no problem with our process”.

Frank is of the opinion that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees procedural fairness and this is applicable to the Committee of Adjustment process. He will follow up his investigation of the situation.

It was moved by Frank Tall and seconded by William Roberts that SARA/SARG supports the application of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for due process. The motion was carried.

William Roberts reported that a recent legal challenge regarding requirements under the Statutory Powers Act for the Committee of Adjustment to provide written decisions of the COA hearings, resulted in the court ruling that because there is a video record of the hearings available on YouTube the recordings are sufficient to satisfy the requirement.

1. **Gofundme Account**

Veronica Wynne reported that the Association/Group has opened a Gofundme account to cover costs of participating in appeals such as the one for 2461 Bloor St. W. and engaging in the many matters that affect the community.

1. **Proposed Official Plan Amendment to Allow the Sale of Park Lands**

William Roberts reported that the City has proposed to change its own Official Plan to permit the sale of park land to undefined “Public Agencies”. If the “Public Agency” has the power to dispose of the land as it sees fit then there is no assurance that the land will not be redeveloped. The new zoning by-law may also reduce required notice of the sale.

1. **Garden Suites**

William Roberts reported that as of October 23rd the province’s position with Regulation 299-19 is that there are too many restrictions for Garden Suites and planning requirements such as the angular plain, size, and separation distances should be amended.

Some of the changes are: a smaller four metre separation from the main building, ground floor limits of 60sqm., no limits for ancillary building below46 % of the property area.

We have seen very large proposals at the Committee of adjustment being passed without the need for new expanded permissions.

It was moved by William Roberts and seconded by Sherrel Dhanpaul to oppose the proposed changes under Provincial Regulation 229-19 Additional Units. The motion was carried.

William Roberts noted that the loss of the right of appeal means that where we were able to appeal legislation such as this we can no longer ensure that such decisions and the lower courts are just.

1. **Tax Assessments**

It was noted that new tax assessments are not being done to update the value of renovated homes. Instead all homes are being taxed at the 2016 assessment rates. It was proposed that the requirement for an assessment should be tied to the occupancy permits.

It was moved by William Roberts and seconded by Stewart French for the Association/Group to write to councillor Perks, Mayor Olivia Chow, and if no action then the Auditor General, that occupancy permits are not being issued and we ask that the matter be addressed and that inspections should be required after one year of the issuance of the building permit. The motion was carried.

1. **Wrap up**

Veronica Wynne closed the meeting with a photograph of community members holding their placards before boarding a bus to go to the TLAB Hearings for 34 Southport many years ago.

1. **Adjournment:** It was moved by Gary Norris and seconded by Sybil Wilkinson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.