

Annual General Meeting
June 2, 2021

Palmerston Area Residents' Association



PARA REPORT

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we, in the City of Toronto, are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat

What does the stewardship of our land mean today?



peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. We are grateful to live, work and play on this land, and we honour the stewardship of this land by Indigenous peoples in times past by committing ourselves to continue this stewardship in the future for the benefit of all.

INTRODUCTION

We are at last cautiously easing some restrictions on life, and that brings a sense of relief. However, I think most of us also carry a feeling of fatigue, at the very least tiring of our screens. So, thank you for participating - for a second time - in a virtual AGM and for reading this report on PARA's activities.

Like most organizations now we begin our AGM with a land acknowledgement. If we pay attention to what we are saying, we will discover that this acknowledgement contains some radical and challenging values. We not only acknowledge that this land was inhabited by aboriginal peoples well before European settlers arrived, but we also speak of sharing the land and using it for human flourishing and the common good in the present and future. Do we see these values at work in the use and development of land - both public and private - in our neighbourhood? I hope that they guide the goals, activities and advocacy of PARA in making this an attractive, liveable community, welcoming and accessible to all.

The photo from the Toronto Library archives shows the Palmerston Ave gates probably some 50 years ago. Comparing that photo to the same location today reveals a host of issues and developments for our neighbourhood: heritage retention, failing tree canopy, installation of bike lanes and stoplights, College St deterioration, soaring real estate values, intensification and affordable housing to name just a few. As we address these issues and try to bring improvements to our neighbourhood, can we be guided by the values inherent in our land acknowledgement?

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS: BOARD, MVTG, CSTG, GREEN CTTEE, COMMUNICATIONS & NEWSLETTER

I'd like to thank on your behalf everyone who has contributed to the betterment of this neighbourhood through PARA over the past year. We begin with remembering two people who have made significant contributions and who are no longer with us. Paul Unterman was a long time board member with deep roots in the community, who died on June 11, 2020. Leo Panitch also served on the PARA board many years ago, and then recently on the Mirvish Village Task Group. Leo died on Dec 19, 2020. We give thanks for the lives of both, and mourn their passing from us.

We will name and thank individuals under the various PARA activities, task groups and committees, but the total number of volunteers comes to at least 28, with many people taking on multiple roles. We are fortunate to have such a committed and diverse group who give their time and talents to this neighbourhood.

PARA BOARD:

The board met monthly via Zoom and was an early adopter of a virtual AGM (June 17, 2020). We said goodbye to Kerri Salata, who left to pursue a further degree; and we welcomed Jimmy Lu and Melanie Walker as new members. Continuing members (with board related responsibilities) included: Paul MacLean (chair), Kei Yano, Nick Forsyth, Ingrid Nasager (membership), Joan Reynolds (treasurer), Elizabeth Cowling (secretary), Frumie Diamond, and Mary Bredin. Joan is retiring this year to take up academic responsibilities. Ingrid will also retire from the board but will continue to manage the web site and contribute to the College St Task Group. Looking ahead to 2021-22 Dorothy Holmes has agreed to be nominated for membership. We will have one vacant spot. Jimmy has agreed to take on the role of membership coordinator. Melanie will manage the eblasts. Elizabeth will fill the dual role of secretary/treasurer.



A special thanks to Mike Layton, our councillor, and his staff (Emily Wong is our constituency rep). Mike and Emily have been very responsive to a variety of requests over the past year, despite the pressures of an increased ward. Activities not covered elsewhere:

- Kei Yano continued her mask making factory, and sales of PARA masks provided not only added safety to the lives of our residents, but also some welcome income to PARA financials.
- The very successful fundraiser for the Daily Bread Food Bank (the Gratitude Project), through which we raised \$10,000, was revived for Thanksgiving and brought in \$4000+. Thanks to Donna Mcfarlane who led this effort.

MEMBERSHIP

It has been incredibly encouraging to see the interest and renewed focus of residents, which has translated into many new memberships, including several Super Members. Members were also more likely to engage with us in 2020, some providing helpful updates, some providing encouragement, and several expressing frustration with City services and procedures. We value our members and our community support!

PARA'S ADVOCACY

This past year has seen a considerable increase in the interventions PARA has made at the municipal and provincial levels, due in large part to provincial incursions into municipal planning and bylaws, and municipal measures related to COVID - 19. We thank Jessica Bell, our MPP, in keeping us apprised of issues that affect us. A brief summary of our letters and communications on behalf of the neighbourhood:

1. objection to the rescinding of the noise bylaw relating to construction by the provincial government
2. encouragement with other RA's to the mayor to open up public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists during the pandemic
3. support for bike lanes on Palmerston
4. support for the goal of 100 km of bike lanes
5. support in principle for allowing a variety of housing types in neighbourhoods, pointing out that PARA currently has all the proposed types; also raising questions and concerns
6. support for inclusionary zoning
7. addressing dissatisfaction with the current Committee of Adjustment process (see CSTG update)
8. Mirvish Village construction issues (see MVTG & MVCMC update)
9. critique of proposed city budget
10. critique of Ministry Zoning Orders (occasioned by MZO issued for the Foundry demolition; done through FoNTRA - see below)

We have received requests from RAs and other bodies to support their positions and advocacy, usually by adding our voice to the critique of development projects or bylaw changes. These requests have forced us to re-examine the limits of our advocacy. After discussion the board re-affirmed PARA's approach which has been that our interventions should be based on perceived effects in our neighbourhood and on the PARA vision. So, although board members may feel strongly about a particular issue or the need to support neighbouring RAs, we have declined to offer official support on a number of occasions (where for example an egregious development was clearly well outside our geographical boundaries). What we have done is to alert our members to the issues and invite them to participate on an individual basis. Obviously, each request or issue is a judgement call, and we have sympathy with fellow citizens who often feel overwhelmed by the combined forces of developers, institutions, and government, with scant recourse to rules and bylaws and few resources to get their opinions heard. We are members of two coalitions - FoNTRA and CORRA - and through these participate selectively in advocacy.

Most of the advocacy letters have been written by the chair, Paul MacLean. Melanie Walker has steered our relationship with FoNTRA.

COMMUNICATIONS & NEWSLETTER

Eblasts, Facebook and Twitter

Being mostly homebound in 2020 caused us to see and use our neighbourhood in different ways. There was a tremendous focus on green space and access, renewed interest in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, a reevaluation of safe and reliable local food options, and an increased emphasis on community well-being. That community interest ignited a search for hyper-local information, which we endeavoured to provide through regular eblasts and our Facebook page. We have seen great growth (over 20%) in our eblast subscriptions and we have 483 Facebook followers.

Over the past year we made an effort to direct our residents to become active participants in the processes of City governance, from skateboard parks to quiet streets, affordable housing to development proposals. And in a time of great need across Toronto, we engaged with our community, and YOU responded, raising over \$13,000 for Daily Bread Food Bank initiatives.

PARA joined Twitter in January 2021, and has slowly built up a small following (50 followers). It has been a good platform to monitor the activities and issues tabled by neighbourhood residents and other RA's throughout Toronto. It has also allowed us to amplify our promotion of materials or events. For example, the launch of the Green Plan and associated event benefited from retweets from residents and public figures with higher followings. If you don't already, please join us: [@PalmerstonARA](#)

Ingrid Nasager has managed eblasts and Mary Bredin has posted on Facebook, with occasional help from Donna Mcfarlane. Melanie Walker manages our Twitter account.

Website:

Anchoring our social media outreach, our website provides a permanent home to important community documentation, such as:

- PARA initiatives, including our widely reviewed [PARA Green Plan](#)
- Community resources, like [PARA's Guide to Navigating the Committee of Adjustment](#)
- PARA's advocacy work, including input to the City's budget process, an objection to the provincial suspension of the construction noise bylaw, and opposition to the expanded powers granted through Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZO)
- Our semi-annual newsletter, and the soon-to-be-expanded Community History section

Our website allows us to document the successes of community activism, the concerns of our members, the contributions of our many varied residents, and our collective hope for a more sustainable, prosperous and equitable neighbourhood.

Ingrid Nasager has been our webmaster with help from Nick Forsyth.

Newsletter

The newsletter team produced two print editions over the past year, delivered to all residences in the PARA neighbourhood (2000 copies). This is a remarkable accomplishment given the restrictions under which the usual writing and editing had to take place. There was a special emphasis on highlighting and supporting our local businesses. Our thanks to all our advertisers who help to cover the costs of production and delivery. And a recognition of the dedicated and talented team who write, edit, design and put it all together: Frumie Diamond, Mary Bredin, Kei Yano, James Choy, Fernanda Pisani (designer), Nick Forsyth, Letlotlo Gariba, and Melanie Walker. Fall/Winter 2020 was the last issue edited by Frumie Diamond, and we give thanks for all the improvements and focus she brought to our publication over a long tenure. Mary Bredin took over the role of editor with the most recent edition, and we are very grateful for her leadership. Elizabeth Cowling solicits the ads, which defray the costs.

GREEN COMMITTEE

The Green Committee has had an active year starting with the Zoom launch of the Green Plan in February. The plan has now been approved by the Toronto and East York Community Council as an official planning document. Pursuant to the launch, interested community members have been meeting

to discuss ways to improve the tree canopy and ways to maintain the Healey Willan gardens during times of social distancing. We are also working towards a grant to landscape (with green principles) several derelict City sites, one on Manning, just south of Bloor and the pinch point on Clinton, just north of College. Two other areas are on our radar: the SW corner of Palmerston and Bloor by the Palmerston Gate and the paved over flanking at College and Manning beside the Bank of Montreal. Our project from PollinatorTO with our partner, Harbord Collegiate Eco Club is on hold until school can resume. Our member Jimmy Lu was selected by the City to be a Climate Action Champion for our ward. Green Committee members include: Frumie Diamond (convenor), Becky Armstrong, Adam Barnes, Jimmy Lu, Kei Yano, Nick Forsyth, Scott MacRitchie, Heather Marshall, Rachel Melzer.



PARTY IN THE PARK

As you will have read in the latest newsletter, the decision has been taken to postpone for a second year the very popular Party-in-the-Park due to COVID restrictions. This is one of the few opportunities we have in PARA for a large scale community gathering, and we hope to resurrect this event, certainly by this time next year if not sooner. Joan Reynolds has led the organization, but will relinquish this role for the next event. Joan is prepared to mentor any volunteers who would like to take it on.

MIRVISH VILLAGE TASK GROUP (MVTG) & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CMC)

There are two remaining issues relating to the planning of the Mirvish Village site: park design and traffic management. We are still waiting on the City for a proposed plan for the latter. Earlier this Spring the park

architects hired by Westbank, PFS Studio, presented at a public meeting (March 24) a revised park design. While generally well received, there has been an overwhelming volume of online comment - 932 - that City Parks has summarized. There is strong support for the concept of a 'passive green oasis', but beyond that, much diverse opinion. City Parks has agreed to host a meeting with a small group from PARA and MVTG for our reflections, before giving final direction to the architectural firm. Construction is planned for 2022. (You can view the park design, comments and executive summary here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/new-parks-facilities/mirvish-village-park/>.) Leo Panitch was a valuable member of this group, and we are thankful for his contribution and hospitality. Continuing members of the MVTG include Donna Mcfarlane and Paul MacLean.

Although construction is more or less on schedule at the Mirvish Village site, nearby residents on Markham in particular have experienced frequent violations of the construction agreement, usually to do with noise, parking and traffic from construction vehicles. Despite repeated complaints these violations were not addressed, so that, in part due to frustration, two of PARA's representatives resigned from the Construction Management Committee. Our councillor, Mike Layton, took over chairing this committee, and complaints seem to have abated. We convey our thanks to Roy Sawyer and Ken Balderson who have contributed immensely by representing residents on this committee. Roy was also a member of the MVTG and most recently provided much respected advice on traffic management issues. Tara Armstrong, a resident on Markham, has taken up the role vacated by Roy and Ken.



COLLEGE STREET TASK GROUP (CSTG)

Our group was formed to voice the wishes of PARA residents in shaping future growth and development along our stretch of College Street.

During the past year, we have laid the groundwork for action by forming collaborative relationships with Councillor Layton, City Planning, and the Little Italy Business Improvement Association (BIA). This year we will be reaching out directly to our neighbours to understand what residents value most about College Street and to collectively build a clear vision for the street as it emerges from the pandemic.

Also this year, the College Street Task Group continued to be active in promoting the interests of PARA residents with respect to new development proposals that affect our neighbourhood.

Here are some of our accomplishments:

- Published “*Navigating the Committee of Adjustment Process*”, to prepare residents to make their views known concerning proposed developments. Created with inputs from across our community and from other residents’ associations, the guide is now available on the PARA website: <https://palmerstonara.org/news/paras-guide-to-navigating-the-committee-of-adjustment-now-available/>
- Published a fascinating story about “*The Bakers’ Strike of 1935*”, when a riot broke out on College Street at Euclid. Coming soon on PARA’s Community History page!
- Collaboration with the Little Italy Business Improvement Association (BIA) in their plans to revitalize College Street.
- Participation in a working group, formed by Mike Layton, to provide community input into development plans for 419-431 College Street (Sneaky Dee’s site).
- Monitoring of “soft sites” for development within our area. By staying abreast of new projects we hope to offer developers a proactive, collaborative approach to building a better community.

Thanks to task group members Astra Burka, Allison Kirk-Montgomery, Franz Greenwood, Ingrid Nasager, Paul MacLean, Richard Stursberg and Susan Turner (convener).

FoSTRA

In May 2021 PARA joined the newly established FoSTRA, the Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations, the aim of which is to help shape the creation of policies at all levels of government, preserve and enhance the quality of life for Torontonians, promote neighborhood identity and vitality, and ensure responsible and respectful development within its boundaries. It has identified MZOs as a major short term priority, as well as ensuring community representation in new developments such as Ontario Place and Ports Ontario. It is closely modelled after sister federation FoNTRA, which represents resident associations north of Bloor. PARA is also a member of CORRA, another confederation of residents' associations which among other issues focuses on local building and zoning bylaws. By tapping into these larger entities, PARA is able to continually monitor new developments and issues that impact our local residents, while also amplifying our own advocacy work on issues of local concern.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Revenue notes:

- there was a considerable increase in membership revenue compared to 2019
- the donation amount was largely due to the production and sale of masks by Kei Yano
- Party-in-the-Park was cancelled, so there is neither expense nor income

Expense notes:

- one of the two newsletters was produced only online, hence there were no expenses for printing or delivery
- the website was redesigned and the higher figure represents a one-time expense

Balance and profit/loss notes:

- there was a small profit in 2020, about the same amount as the loss in 2019
- the figure \$3,894 represents the end-of-year bank balance for 2020.
- balance May 31, 2021 is \$4,899.

PARA BUDGET REVIEW 2019- 2021							
Jun-21							
		2019		2020		2021	
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
REVENUE							
Membership		2500.00	1669.00	2000.00	2482.00	2000.00	
Advertising		2000.00	1000.00	1500.00	750.00	1500.00	
Donation		500.00	1190.00	250.00	755.00	250.00	
Party in the Park		1000.00	649.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	
Other		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
SUB		6000.00	4508.00	4500.00	3987.00	4500.00	
EXPENSES							
Newsletter		3000.00	3849.00	3200.00	1254.00	3200.00	
Development		1000.00	286.00	250.00	0.00	250.00	
Events and Com		400.00	294.00	300.00	88.00	300.00	
Party in the Park		1100.00	700.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	
Website		100.00	396.00	1100.00	1066.00	550.00	
Admin and Bank		100.00	67.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	
Hospitality		200.00	122.00	150.00	41.00	150.00	
SUB		5900.00	5714.00	5850.00	2549.00	5300.00	0.00
TOTAL		100.00	-1206.00	-1350.00	1438.00	-800.00	0.00
Balance Sheet		uesday, December 31, 201		ursday, December 31, 20		Monday, May 31, 2021	
		4516.00		3894.00			

We thank Joan Reynolds for her careful stewardship of PARA's modest funds as treasurer. Her role will be assumed by Elizabeth Cowling, who will become PARA's secretary/treasurer.

MOTIONS

1. Moved by ... and seconded by ... that the following be elected to PARA's Board for the 2021 - 2022 term: Mary Bredin, Elizabeth Cowling, Frumie Diamond, Nick Forsyth, Dorothy Holmes, Jimmy Lu, Paul MacLean, Melanie Walker, Kei Yano.
2. Moved by Joan Reynolds and seconded by ... that the financial statements and budget for 2021 be accepted.
3. Motion to adjourn the business part of the meeting.