



# Palmerston Area Residents' Association

## PARA REPORT for the AGM May 26, 2022

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY

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 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.

‘We approach our lives on different trajectories, each of us spinning in our own separate, shining orbits. What gives this life its resonance is when those trajectories cross and we become engaged with each other, for as long or as fleetingly as we do. There’s a shared energy then, and it can feel as though the whole universe is in the process of coming together. I live for those times. No one is truly ever “just passing through.” Every encounter has within it the power of enchantment, if we’re willing to look for it.’  
*Embers: One Ojibway’s Meditations* pg 38, by Richard Wagamese.

### INTRODUCTION

This is our third virtual AGM. We had hoped to be in person or at least produce a hybrid meeting. However, a sudden surge in the virus in early April led us to abandon these ideas, knowing that many people for various reasons remain cautious of indoor gatherings. We are planning to have an outdoor event on June 12, 2 pm - reactivating our Party-in-the-Park for the first time in a number of years. We hope you can come and reacquaint yourselves with your neighbours and perhaps make some new friends. In the meantime, thank you for participating once again 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. We've also included a meditation by Richard Wagamese, because it causes us to think about what we do on this land, how we interact with one another, how we create expressions of community. This is a particular issue as we, hopefully, emerge from isolation.

## **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS: BOARD, MIRVISH VILLAGE TASK GROUP, PLANNING WORKING GROUP, GREEN WORKING GROUP, COMMUNICATIONS & NEWSLETTER**

On your behalf, thank you to everyone who has contributed to the betterment of this neighbourhood through PARA over the past year. We are fortunate to have a committed and diverse group who give their time and talents to this neighbourhood and who care about the people who live here.

### **PARA BOARD:**

The board met monthly via Zoom. Melanie Walker moved from the neighbourhood and her place was filled by Allison Kirk-Montgomery. Continuing members (with board related responsibilities) included: Paul MacLean (chair), Kei Yano, Nick Forsyth, Elizabeth Cowling (secretary/treasurer), Frumie Diamond, Dorothy Holmes, Jimmy Lu (membership), Lettie Gariba and Mary Bredin. Mary, who has edited the newsletter, has resigned from the board and editorial responsibilities. Ateqah Khaki has agreed to be nominated to complete our complement of 10 for the coming year.

Lettie is facilitating a strategic planning process for the board. Our first session led us to discuss the need for community building in our neighbourhood after a considerable time of isolation.

A special thanks to Mike Layton, our councillor, and his staff, especially Emily Wong our constituency rep. With new bike lanes and various development issues in our neighbourhood Mike and Emily have given valuable advice and handled a lot of meetings, requests and complaints for us, all with efficiency and good humour.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

A reminder to renew (or take out) your membership! This can easily be done via e-transfer through our web site. Memberships provide essential funding for our communications.

### **PARA'S ADVOCACY**

Many of the issues identified in last year's report continue, and PARA continues to advocate at the municipal and provincial levels on issues that affect our neighbourhood. We thank Jessica Bell, our MPP, for keeping us well informed of relevant provincial legislation. Because of the increased volume of planning issues, the College St Task Group has taken on an expanded mandate and has become the PARA Planning Working Group, taking up much of our advocacy over the past year.

## **COMMUNICATIONS & NEWSLETTER**

### ***Website, E-blasts, Facebook and Twitter***

Lettie, Adam (Barnes) and Ateqah have recently taken on the task of creating an integrated approach to our social media, and refreshing the format of e-blasts. They are developing a proposal for PARA's communications, which will include the use of the website.

### ***Newsletter***

The newsletter team produced two editions in 2021 - one online and one in print, the latter version delivered to all residences in the PARA neighbourhood (2000 copies). In addition to the talented team who put it all together (Mary Bredin, Kei Yano, James Choy, Fernanda Pisani (designer), Nick Forsyth,



Lettie Gariba & Frumie Diamond), our thanks go to all our advertisers who help to cover the costs of production and delivery. Elizabeth Cowling solicits the ads. With the resignation of Mary Bredin, our editor, and several members of the newsletter working group, we will need to refresh this team in the coming year. We were sorry to hear of James' illness, which prevented the appearance of his column 'New in the Neighbourhood,' and we wish him a full and speedy recovery. Volunteers welcome.

## GREEN COMMITTEE



Green working group members; Frumie Diamond (chair), Adam Barnes, Ateqah Khaki, Jimmy Lu, Jini Stolk, Scott MacRitchie, Kei Yano, Nick Forsyth, Dave Hunsburger

***Congratulations to the Green Committee!! This year, 2022, the Green Committee received Jessica Bell's (MPP) Community Recognition Award for Environmental Advocacy.***

It's been a busy year. We have initiated several new projects and with COVID restrictions loosened, we've been able to move forward on projects that have been on hold.

### ***Communications Strategy***

We now have a much improved social media presence. We also have the ability to send out more targeted information to interested community members on a regular basis.

### ***Pollinator Garden at Harbord Collegiate***

The pollinator garden at Harbord Collegiate has begun! We received a grant from PollinateTO in partnership with Harbord Collegiate to establish a pollinator garden in the school's front yard. Working with the students and community members, the garden beds were prepared and planting has started as of this week (week of the AGM May 25). Maintenance over the summer will be critical – watering and weeding. The project had been on hold due to COVID.

### ***Tree Canopy Project***

A very successful tree tour was organized as part of Jane's Walk this month (May). About 30 people came out to hear Eric Davies explain the importance of native trees for our environment. More tree tours, education about planting native trees, and caring for our tree canopy are to come.

### ***Taking Back and Creating Green Space***

Through perseverance, we have a commitment from the City as well as initial design proposals to green and rehabilitate:

- (i) the city owned land adjacent to the PAT (Korean Grocery Store) parking lot. (Manning and Bloor.)
- (ii) the Palmerston Gates, southwest corner of Bloor Street and Palmerston Avenue. (And to fix the damaged gates on the southeast side.)

### ***Healey Willan Park Gardens***

Plans have been made to increase native plantings, put up signage and organize summer care and maintenance. There are several gardens to be tended in Healey Willan. As well, we are caring for the traffic calmer on Euclid, south of Ulster by Allan Reynolds Lane. We are planning on establishing a children's edible garden in a raised bed.

### ***Clean Up Days***

Our spring clean up day was one of the best yet with community members spanning out to clean up our streets and lane-ways. Our contest winner went to Samantha Hill. Congratulations! Unfortunately our fall clean up day was washed out with a cold sleety rain.

### ***Environmental Advocacy***

We are participating in community consultations with the City such as the bike lanes on Palmerston Boulevard and the College Street cycling and pedestrian upgrades. As well, we have advocated for maintaining green space in our community through presentations to the City.

### ***Net Zero Emissions (GHG)***

This is a very important area which we are just beginning to address. We will be promoting the initiatives that have been developed by the Harbord Village Residents' Association (HVRA), our neighbouring RA. To date, we have contributed to the e-bike strategy. (Go to HVRA's website for more details.)

## **PARTY IN THE PARK**

Kei has taken on the task of organizing this event, planned for Sunday June 12 at 2 pm. This is the main social event sponsored by PARA, and is much enjoyed by the community. Please get in touch with her if you can contribute in any way.

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

Members of the MVTG (Roy Sawyer, Donna Mcfarlane, Ken Balderson, Paul MacLean, Sue Dexter) have consulted on several occasions with City departments on a traffic management plan for the MV site and surrounding streets. Integrating this planning with the proposed bike lanes on Palmerston is a particular concern, as the bike lanes are expected to involve changing sections of Palmerston to one way





traffic, complicating entrances to and exits from the site. Planning is not complete. Residents on Markham will be much relieved when construction is finally finished.

## **PARA PLANNING WORKING GROUP**

PPWG members: Astra Burka, Frumie Diamond, Allison Kirk-Montgomery (convenor), Paul MacLean, Ingrid Nasager, Martin Ship, Richard Stursberg.

Our mandate is to consider issues of planning and development and to engage with PARA residents, city planning staff, our councillor, developers and other local organizations on these matters. Our group is concerned not just with buildings but with issues of street character, parks and environmental health, transportation, and affordability – all the factors that make for a livable and inclusive community.

Planning Group members this year have taken part in community consultations on the following large developments:

- The Sneaky Dee's Site (the south-east corner of Bathurst and College). Along with Friends of Kensington Market and Harbord Village Residents Association, and with the support of Mike Layton's office, we have identified affordable housing as our key priority. As of now, the developer has been unresponsive to our requests, and the development is stalled.
- The Toronto Western Hospital Site. UHN has proposed a new patient and operating tower to be built on the present parking lot at Bathurst and Nassau. PPWG members will be taking part in the community consultation process. We are particularly interested in publicly accessible green space at ground level as well as the long-term context of the tower.

We will continue to monitor sites of potential development.

With sky-high real estate values, new city by-laws, and proposed provincial legislation, change is also happening on every street in our neighbourhood. Task group members support the city's broad policy of increasing the "missing middle" of housing options by encouraging laneway suites and multiplex units. Sometimes property owners apply for variances from city by-laws, and sometimes these requests are opposed by neighbours. Though PARA does not usually take part in Committee of Adjustment hearings that deal with such requests, this year we have intervened in cases that we considered would have a broad impact or might set a precedent.

- Working with PARA's Green Committee and neighbours, we objected when laneway suite applicants sought variances to reduce the amount of soft landscaping below that required by city by-laws. We consider that with increasing population density comes an even greater need to preserve our gardens, trees and ground cover. Sometimes these green arguments have been successful.
- At the request for assistance from renters from our community, we have shared information, contacted the city planning departments that oversee rental policies, and written letters of concern to the Committee of Adjustment. Though tenants are being displaced, we helped them advocate for a better deal from owners.
- We offer our "Guide to the Committee of Adjustment" to help PARA residents and others navigate the process. It is available on the PARA website and will be updated to reflect changes in bylaws and processes.
- The city's enforcement budget is inadequate for its responsibilities. We continue to ask for monitoring and follow-up, for instance in cases of illegal construction.

In all of these matters of planning and development, we share resources and advocate for solutions with other residents' associations and community groups.

- Collaborating with the Harbord Village Residents' Association, we advocated for better pedestrian and cyclist safety measures, more green areas, removal of lighting that damages trees, and longer-term planning during consultations with the city on the College Street Upgrade project.
- We communicate regularly with Councillor Mike Layton and his team and with the Little Italy Business Association
- Our members represent PARA with CORRA (Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations), FoSTRA (Federation of South Toronto RAs), and FoNTRA (Federation of North Toronto RAs). These organizations take on various planning and civic issues. We sometimes support their positions, and at other times we maintain an independent point of view.

### ***College St Survey***

The state of planning and development in the city of Toronto is complex and rapidly changing. Provincial laws are reducing the ability of the local community to shape the built landscape and therefore the quality of life in our city and neighborhood. Our next project is a survey to help us deal with these challenges.

"Have Your Say on the Future of College Street" will ask community members and visitors their opinions and ideas on the future of College Street from Bathurst to Shaw. As your neighbourhood association, we will use your responses to present your views to Councillor Mike Layton, to Toronto City Planning and Development, and to developers.

We welcome new members!

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

### ***Notes:***

- one print newsletter produced in 2021; two or three newsletters in 2022
- website budget for possible expense related to communications strategy



<b>PARA - Palmerston Area Residents Association</b>							
<b>Balance Sheet</b>							
		<b>2020</b>			<b>2021</b>		<b>2022</b>
		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>
	<b>REVENUE</b>						
	Membership	2000.00	2400.00		2000.00	2232.79	2000.00
	Advertising	1500.00	750.00		1500.00	500.00	1500.00
	Donation	250.00	755.00		250.00	250.00	250.00
	Party in the Park	750.00	0.00		750.00	0.00	750.00
	Other	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
	<b>SUB</b>	<b>4500.00</b>	<b>3905.00</b>		<b>4500.00</b>	<b>2982.79</b>	<b>4500.00</b>
	<b>EXPENSES</b>						
	Newsletter	3200.00	1254.00		3200.00	1372.95	3200.00
	Development	250.00	0.00		250.00	0.00	250.00
	Events and Community Sup	300.00	88.00		300.00	25.00	300.00
	Party in the Park	750.00	0.00		750.00	0.00	750.00
	Website	1100.00	1066.00		1100.00	326.85	1100.00
	Admin and Bank	100.00	100.00		100.00	22.50	100.00
	Hospitality	150.00	41.00		150.00	63.65	150.00
	<b>SUB</b>	<b>5850.00</b>	<b>2549.00</b>		<b>5850.00</b>	<b>1810.95</b>	<b>5850.00</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-1350.00</b>	<b>1356.00</b>		<b>-1350.00</b>	<b>1171.84</b>	
	<b>BANK BALANCE</b>						
		3894.00			5061.00		

Elizabeth Cowling, secretary/treasurer.

## MOTIONS

1. Moved by Allison Kirk-Montgomery and seconded by Dorothy Holmes that the following be elected to PARA's Board for the 2022 - 2023 term: Elizabeth Cowling, Frumie Diamond, Nick Forsyth, Dorothy Holmes, Jimmy Lu, Paul MacLean, Kei Yano, Lettie Gariba, Allison Kirk-Montgomery, Ateqah Khaki
2. Moved by Elizabeth Cowling and seconded by Allison Kirk-Montgomery that the financial statements for 2021 and budget for 2022 be accepted.
3. Motion to adjourn the business part of the meeting.