

SVRA Meeting Minutes

October 10th, 2013

Present: Jennifer Hunter (Chair) Jon Osmond (Vice chair), Mark Fram (SVRA Planning), Ed Janiszewski (Lane Naming Project), Eleanor Smollett (VSPRC), Peter Groves (Bill Bolton/VSPRC), Areej Hasso (Ward 20 Constituency Assistant), Arshad Nazir (Transportation Service/Traffic Op's City of Toronto), Sue Mander, Celia Lottridge, Ivane Thiebaut, Susan Gourlay, Steve Sheridan, Sylvie Goldfain, Amanda Kent, Judith Newman, Oliver Heinrich, Darren Ford, Maggie Groves, Linda Harris, Jenny Foster, Antony Anderson, Dawn Vrablic, Peter Diaz, Alex Bozikovic, Katie Thomas.

Regrets: PC B.Haywood 14 Division (had to attend to a collision)

Traffic and Safety

Concerns: compiled prior to meeting

- Speed, temperature of traffic **throughout** neighbourhood – along streets, turning around corners, shooting out of parking lots, laneways, or making a run for main streets (Bloor, Dupont, Bathurst and Christie)
- Rolling or no stopping at intersections: bikes and cars. Palmerston, Follis and Barton are particularly bad
- Wrong way driving: bikes and cars – can apply to laneways in some instances
- Poor/misplaced or un-obvious signs. Obstructed signs. SIZE of signs and locations
- Illegal parking (not permit-parking related)
- turnabouts in intersections of streets to change direction
- Challenges with intersection at Bathurst/Wells and Olive Ave
- suspicious activity in some laneways
- U-haul drivers driving dangerously through the neighbourhood
- Specific concerns around Palmerston School, Vermont Park (Bill Bolton and St Albans)

Added via email:

- Bike traffic: not stopping/slowing down at intersections, gg up one way streets in opposite direction, speeding.
- Wrong way entry into Palmerston Sq from Palmerston Ave +/- or Barton Aves
- Utility vehicles, large trucks and TTC + wheel Trans vehicles along Barton to circumvent intersections and traffic along major thoroughfares
- Narrowing of intersections along Barton “should be fixed.” Since staggered parking was introduced, this causes major confusion and traffic congestion. Cars are getting swiped and drivers are resorting to using the sidewalk to create more road space.

“Every intersection in the neighbourhood has a personal story” It is important to understand the nature of the problem in order to find potential and feasible solutions.

Discussion at meeting -Contributing factors include:

- Obstruction of signage – overgrown trees at many intersections.
- “Blind” turns: foliage blocking sightlines
- Size and placement of signs (for eg. At north end of Palmerston Square @ Barton)
- How stop signs are disregarded – rolling stops or no stops and dangerous turns around corners THROUGHOUT neighbourhood.
- Cars and bikes going wrong way: danger to cyclist if go around a corner and into oncoming traffic/visibility and ability of driver (cyclist) to react effectively.
- School traffic.
- What are the traffic generators?
- Accessible “routes”: can there be further integration of maze?
- Construction on main arteries prompting more drivers to use neighbourhood as a cut through. Construction also causing increased frustration and impatience.
- **Barton St:** Many schools along Barton – St Raymond, Palmerston, St Georges, Institute of Child Study + Alliance Francaise, Huron St P.S.: Speed, volume, confusion, traffic backup owing to the confusion from curb extensions + staggered parking plan - it is the “death nail” for Barton St. First/last parking spot places are adding to back up throughout the neighbourhood. This is especially true at corner of Barton and Christie for vehicles entering the neighbourhood on Barton who turn L or R from the light.
JF: asked if stats had been collected by Transportation during study of staggered parking plan? Is a copy of study and results accessible?
Action: Areej looking into this.
Drivers speeding up to make lights at Bathurst St. Can we take the cycling route sign away? How does/does the designation contribute to the challenges?
- Cut ins at many intersections, for eg., Olive and Palmerston: large vehicles are driving up and over curb to make the turn. Tour/School buses barely missing utilities on corner and cars on road (I’ve twice seen TOUR BUSES?!?! Stuck in neighbourhood...). Also, traffic-calming container at Palmerston and Vermont adds to confusion, congestion and frustration.
- Are the existing traffic calming devices in neighbourhood effective or counter-productive?
- Peter the Crossing Guard: routinely and rudely disregarded, disrespected and often physically injured at the intersection of Barton and Palmerston. He has 3 shifts daily: morning 8:20 – 8:55am, 11:20 – 11:55am, 3:20 – 4:00pm. Drivers and cyclists disregard him, spit and yell at him, collide into him and show signs of disrespect. Cyclists and

vehicle drivers disregard safety of people of all ages at the intersection too often not stopping or yielding to pedestrians.

- Lack of police enforcement throughout neighbourhood

U-Haul

- Area residents have been reporting via Facebook Seaton Village (Toronto) and emails to the SVRA the use of Follis Ave, Clinton St and Manning Ave as a cut through route for U-Haul drivers to/from their 2 locations on Bathurst St and Dupont St respectively. Driver's extreme speeds, failure to stop, disregard for safety when pulling in and out of the lots, especially on Bathurst St, are causing significant safety concerns.
- Speeds of 60-70km/hr have been witnessed
- Vehicles are "blowing through" stop signs
- A parent and her stroller/child were almost run down as a driver pulled out of the Bathurst St retail lot (crazy antics were witnessed when the vacant lot at 1079 Bathurst was used).
- The trucks, with Arizona license plates, have been parked on Follis Ave – Follis is routinely used for overflow parking.
- It was reported that the owner denied driving recklessly, yet has been seen repeatedly speeding and failing to stop at Stop signs in the neighbourhood and specifically along Follis Ave.

ACTION: JH to follow up with PC Haywood and U-haul (Arizona head office)

Traffic Light at Bathurst and Wells Sts

Several distinct challenges at this intersection

1. Turning right from Wells onto Bathurst St: drivers emerge recklessly turning north onto Bathurst. This is a significant risk, especially for pedestrians.
The sightlines behind the lines of the intersection are obscured by landscaping and a fence, hydro utilities + sometimes by parked cars on Bathurst. Drivers often commit to turning right on the red when cars travelling at very fast speeds north along Bathurst approach the intersection and the driver is already well into the intersection. Drivers fail to stop properly on the red light or disregard pedestrians at the intersection. The walk prompt ONLY works if button used. The light is also VERY long for N/S traffic. Wait times are encouraging J-Walking
2. Drivers all too often turning LEFT onto Wells St – is NO ENTRY signage apparent?

N.B. Placement of City of Toronto Street Furniture Garbage bin = can NOT open doors of the bus.

ACTION: JH and MF to raise concerns around garbage containers along Bathurst St at Bathurst St Study Meetings

Proposed Solutions

Solutions may evolve from an understanding of the traffic generators + why these things are happening. The approach to resolving challenges must be more holistic vs. fragmented/"piecemeal" as has been done thus far. This has not provided meaningful or lasting results.

- Can we have a cross walk at Bathurst St and Vermont Ave?
- Can physical barriers be built along a designated safe walk route to and around the school?
- Are speed bumps proven to be successful? Or, do drivers become more foolish when present
- Lights to have walk prompts, alter duration of light
- Better, bigger, enhanced visibility of – NOT NECESSARILY MORE – SIGNAGE
- Raised intersections have been discussed in the past – especially on Palmerston Ave.
- Painting intersections (Roadsworth inspired)
- Textured pavement
- Peaceful Protest
- ENFORCEMENT and police presence
- Publicity

Action:

1. **Transportation** (Arshad Nazir, Senior Transportation Technologist with Transportation Services, City of To + **Councillor Vaughan's office/Arrej** will review problems raised at the meeting and come back to SVRA/Seaton Village so we can formulate plans to deal with/treat problems;
2. PC Haywood **Community Response Traffic Unit 14 Division**: wants to hear from the community regarding traffic and safety challenges. His email is bradley.haywood@torontopolice.on.ca PC Haywood and Sgt Catherine White are hoping to be a proactive presence in the neighbourhood. Please put North End/Seaton Village in the subject line of any emails.
3. **JH and SVRA** to enlist community and school volunteers to raise awareness, imagine creative solutions (Peter the Crossing Guard) and peaceful protests – include the press?!
4. **Jh** to bring concerns to Palmerston School Council

Vermont Square Park

Renewal update: after a long delay, work is to resume the week of October 13th, 2013

The delay was caused by our contractor, Mopal, over-extending their work load. Contractual fines were not a sufficient deterrent to ensure the job would be done on time.

This raised the question: Does the RFP process not include mechanisms to ensure this doesn't happen? How are companies screened? What details can be written into a contract to prevent such glitches from occurring?

Areej Hasso: Unfortunately, the contract always goes to the lowest bidder....a relic from the Lastman era. (So while Bad Boy's customers are always offered great products and value without sacrificing anything in the process, it would appear the same doesn't apply to the City and its members) The VSPRC is working diligently to ensure the plan is adhered to, the job is completed properly and responsibly – to the best of their capacity.

Remaining work

- Electrical work/installation of new light standards will happen first. This will impact the entire park + playground
- Mulch to be removed during this week
- Rock formation is being readjusted – improper placement of stones were noted by the VSPRC and followed up with our landscape planner
- Some bench formations/placement being reconsidered. Can we add ashtrays for smokers....though smoking technically illegal in parks?
- Playground gates have settled and are now misaligned. Gates to be fixed so they can close easily and properly by all
- Remove “Street furniture” garbage can on Palmerston north of Olive? Unsightly and redundant.
- Trees have suffered as a result of poor excavation techniques used. All trees are under warranty (still...) and will be tended to
- Identified “safety hazards” were reported 1. Iron retaining wall in front of benches on Rossmore north of Olive and 2. Sharp plastic tube coming about 4-6 inches from ground, west of benches off Rossmore (along bisecting pathway south of Bill Bolton Arena)
- NOTE: tube has been levelled

Action:

1. Areej to take back to Councillor Vaughan the strong request for greater publicity of process by the City to ensure greater transparency and accountability around projects
2. VSPRC to continue communication with City and area residents. Community Notice board to be built in park
3. **Brian Green:** Ward 20 Park Super – attending to status of trees, including Ash, many of which have been inoculated against the Emerald Ash Borer. Note the tags and green spray on those trees. Connect with Palmerston School to create Tree Planting and gardening “Cluster”

Also: Brian has 600 Daffodils to be planted in the park.

Action: set up planting date with Brian/SVRA and area volunteers.

SVRA + Brian – how is the weekend of November 1st or 2nd?

Lane Naming Project:

Ed Janiszewski: reports there have been delays at the City as other items have taken precedents and so no updates to relay.

Laneway signs: cost to include a Seaton Village-specific design (logo) onto the lane signs are very expensive. 40 blades cost \$1800.00. Corporate sponsor may prove problematic and be a conflict of interest.

Fundraising option of crowd funding was suggested

Other fundraising ideas are being welcomed by the committee.

The Great-great grandson of John Poulter noticed the lane name proposal and is supportive, as is the grandson of Louise Tandy Murch, a film Editor in California.

Oliphant’s Academy of Physical Culture is celebrating its 100th year of operation on Nov 24th 2013. The organization is in the process of funding an additional laneway sign, possibly near the

first location on Bloor near Euclid Ave. for a named sign. Ed has been in contact to help coordinate their plans for which the Business is footing the entire bill.

September 22nd, 2013: Freeman Realty + Community History Project (CHP), led by Marilyn Spearin, held an Historical Community Walk. Approximately 20 area residents enjoyed the tour. Thanks to CHP and Freeman Realty for a great event!

Planning

1000-2 Bathurst St

Fire on Bathurst St just north of Olive Ave

1000-2 Bathurst St was the scene of a 2-alarm fire at 5am Monday October 7th

Fire started on the second floor. Thankfully it didn't reach the first floor; thankfully because it is absolutely filled with paint cans and debris from Spector's plumbing and hardware supply that was previously in operation.

According to Capt. Mike Strapko, nearby buildings were evacuated, but the fire was contained to the abandoned building. Unfortunately, adjacent buildings (Robin Cook Casting Agency) have incurred significant smoke and water damage.

A (female) body was discovered during the investigation and police are treating the death as suspicious. The Office of the Fire Marshall is investigating and the file is also being considered suspicious.

- 1000-2 Bathurst St is the site of the proposed redevelopment that the SVRA and neighbours opposed. It was twice turned down at the CofA but approved at the OMB in July, despite the valiant effort by concerned neighbours and the SVRA to convince the OMB otherwise.
- The police and Fire Marshall are aware of this, and they are aware the building has for years been occupied by squatters.
- The SVRA hopes for future discussion of this problem, with representation from other property owners and businesses along Bathurst, to call into question a property owner's rights and responsibilities when their property is derelict and abandoned. Police tell the SVRA that because the building was "properly" secured – i.e., boarded up, no laws were broken by the property owner so enforcement wasn't required at the site. Enforcement happens only when it can be proven that laws are being broken – i.e., prostitution, selling narcotics, etc. The condition of the property, obvious to all in the neighbourhood,

wasn't sufficient to be considered dangerous or requiring action with or by the owner, Marvin Spector.

- There have been 2 other incidences of this happening in the neighbourhood: 1079 Bathurst (site of former Children's Storefront) and on Follis Ave. The consequences can include extraordinary cost to neighbours whose properties are attached owing to insurance-related bureaucratic nightmares. Then there's the threat to lives...
- City Building Inspector, Samuel Choy told me he'd seen pics of the building – PICS! – and determined the building was properly secured as per the Toronto Buildings code requirements.
- City doesn't have resources to send by-law officers to all sites throughout Toronto
- Structural Engineers surveyed the building after the fire. Their report was sent to Toronto Building
- Remedial work was to be completed early in the week of Oct 15 (Note: at time minutes were done, work was ongoing)

ACTION:

- **Areej to look into (improving) enforcement** and Public Planning/Right of way
- **JH to follow up with Inspector Samuel Choy and Councillor Vaughan's office.** Certainly this will be a discussion point at the Bathurst St Study meeting October 22nd.

Bathurst St Study

Mark Fram: reports a real challenge with facilitation of the process – how information is processed, shared, timing of communications and number of consultation events.

That a traffic study is NOT a part of the process undermines its value

Length of new buses will pose considerable new challenges along Bathurst St. For example, placement of street furniture/garbage and utility poles will need to be considered so doors to streetcars and buses can actually open.

BATHURST St Built Form and Land Use Study – Community Consultation Meeting #3

When: Tuesday October 22, 2013

Time: 6:00 – 9:30pm

Where: Central Technical School – Cafeteria – Entry off Borden St, door #2

Website: <http://toronto.ca/planning/bathurst.htm>

Meeting ended at 9:00pm