



RMRA Meeting SEPTEMBER 24, 2013

1. Attendance and Notes:

15 residents/members plus 5 executive members.

2. Special Guest

Brenda Shillington and Jorge from WBS provided the Wabash Town Square updates.

Irene Atkinson, School Trustee, attended.

3. Community Updates

Metrolinx

Part of the Airport link may become part of downtown relief line – a community group is working to get the attention of the TTC to try to make this happen. West Bend and Wabash Building Society are involved, and the RMRA is supporting the effort. Being part of the downtown relief line would force the trains to be electric, in order to be able to stop at additional stations – diesel trains are not able to accelerate and slow down quickly enough to be able to efficiently service stops that are short distances apart.

DRPG – Dundas Roncesvalles Peace Garden

The design is now in the hands of the City, and it is ready to go to tender for construction. The timeline is unclear, but the project is proceeding.

Funeral Home on Roncy

The site is undergoing an ownership change – Mattamy homes is selling the property. They had originally proposed a 12 story building on the site.

383 Sorauren Ave Development

The developer has appealed their application to the Ontario Municipal Board due to the City not meeting the Planning Act's timeline of 180 days for processing a rezoning application. The developer did not meet all of the community concerns raised at the working group meetings. January 6th is the start date of the OMB hearing. The City is opposing the application.

Howard Park Lofts

The site is under construction, all trees removed.

35 Wabash Townhouse Development

No update.

4. Main Event – WABASH UPDATES

1. Town Square

City has owned the entire property since 2000. The park has been here since the mid-1990s due to the activism of the neighbourhood and supportive politicians. Field house opened in 2008.

The next step is the Town Square. Shovels will be in the ground in mid-October. There are two phases, but only one phase has been funded. Funding has come from the community, City, and LiveGreen grant. \$250K has been secured for Phase 1.

Work to be done in Phase 1: grading, infrastructure for phase 2 (plumbing and conduit for electrical), new connections from Wabash Ave into the square, a new sidewalk and new trees along Wabash. Permeable and concrete pavers will be placed in a striped design to align with the building pillars, and event bollards will provide electricity. The space will be primarily open space and used for events, farmers market, etc. Unfortunately there is not enough funding to create a patterned impression of flax flowers to commemorate the linseed factory history.

Manitoba maples on the site will be removed and replaced by sugar maple, river birch, service berry, yellowwood, and other Carolinian forest species. The tree canopy will be more than doubled. There is discussion of starting an adopt-a-tree program to help the trees survive, especially in the first year. Organizations, families or individuals would water and care for their adopted tree.

Phase 2 of the Town square requires another \$350K. The plans include light standards, a pergola, a movie screen, bake oven, additional paving to link the space to the field house, benches, picnic tables, lighting on the façade of the linseed factory. Community fundraising continues to leverage additional funding (in the past, \$1 donated has leveraged an additional \$7).

The conversion of the linseed oil building is on the schedule for City funding in 2019. The date has been pushed a number of times because this community is not the highest priority for community centre construction. The renovation will include: a community kitchen, studios, gym, dance spaces, community spaces.

The Wabash Building Society meets on the first Thursday of every month at the Field House at 7 pm.

2. Short Video about the Park's construction – turning a brownfield and approved public works bus yard into a community space.

The video was put together by the Roncesvalles Village Historical Society in 2009. It featured Gord Perks, Irene Atkinson, and Barbara Hall.

3. Metrolinx Update – Sound Walls

The community was successful in dissuading Metrolinx from driving trucks through the neighbourhood to their storage site at 40 Wabash.

The sound walls are the next challenge for the park and town square. Many in the community hoped that the walls would not be needed and believe that electric trains would not require the walls to be built. However, the trains will not be electrified in time and the noise walls will be built. Metrolinx has undertaken studies that say that noise will not be significantly less with

electric trains, however these have not been released to the community or other experts for review.

Many members of the community don't support the walls. However, residents that live close to the tracks want the walls, to block the noise.

There will be a steel fence along the rail corridor, even where there are not noise walls, due to safety and security concerns. The noise walls may in fact be a better solution for the community than the fences. Options for the walls include a high concrete wall with vines and acrylic coloured panels at the top to allow views and sunlight; full acrylic panels (but these reflect sound rather than absorb it like the concrete); or lower concrete walls with high acrylic panels. Some walls may be available for murals and community art.

Vegetation is not an option because of maintenance (which has to be undertaken by the City), and also because the plantings require more space than concrete walls. Vegetation would also need to be planted on a berm because it may not grow as high as the walls would be.

Currently Sorauren Park is planned to have acrylic panels. There will likely be fill to level out the berm where it meets the noise wall. Construction is supposed to start next year, to be built by 2015. There will also be vibration dampening pads under the tracks. There was a question about how to prevent birds from flying into the panels, but there was not enough information to address this issue.

There was a comment that the community should not accept the level of noise that the current trains put out – GO train engines are significantly louder than VIA or CN trains.

Calling Glenn Murray, Ministry of Transportation, would be the most effective way to fight the walls. Chander Chaddah is preparing a video to direct traffic to the cancertrains.ca site, where you can email all politicians to voice support for electric trains. Fighting against the walls also means pushing back against the diesel trains. The RMRA will send an email urging all residents to send emails to politicians.

Irene Atkinson suggested contacting schools, sports teams, etc., who use the park, to get organized and show strength in numbers.

4. Charles G. Williams Parkette – Friends of Charles Parkette

A new community group has been formed to discuss uses and design of the parkette. Want to plant a butterfly garden. October 18 at 7 pm is the next meeting, location TBD – they would like others to join. They can be reached at friendsofcharlesparkette@gmail.com.

In 1979 the RMRA worked to get the industrial building on the park's site demolished, and has a strong historical link to the development of the parkette.