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Save Our Neighbourhood

February 13, 2005

Who are we?

The Dufferin Grove Residents Association (DGRA) was set up by your neighbours to oppose the fourth building at 730 Dovercourt Rd. Our executive is made up of representatives from the Doversquare Tenants Association (DTA), Hepbourne Hall (HH) and the Bloor-Dufferin Residents' Committee Ltd. (BDRC).

As most of you know, Sterling Silver the owner of the Doversquare high-rises has appealed it's application for a new building to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) because the City didn't respond to their original application within the required 90 day time period. Although the initial application happened in the fall of 2002 and the City was supposed the consult the public on it, a public meeting wasn't called until November of 2004.

What happened at the November 23, 2004 meeting?

250 of you showed up and registered your outrage at the proposed building and having effectively been closed out of the consultation process. Our ward councillor, Adam Giambrone wasn't there because of a conflict of interest.

Giambrone passed the torch to Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone who also wasn't there and sent his assistant instead. City planner Elise Hug was there along with her boss Linda Macdonald, and several representatives of the developer.

The developer showed us plans for a 8-13 storey building of 285 units almost twice as dense as the three existing high-rise towers. When asked how the building grew so much the developer told us it grew to accommodate City planning requests. City planners listened to our complaints but refused to state their position. When asked where else in the city high-rise apartments are built amongst predominately 3 storey homes the planners likened our area to Bloor-Lansdowne and St. Jamestown.

Ultimately a petition opposing the building was signed by almost all of you and delivered to Elise Hug and Joe Pantalone.

What about Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone?

Joe Pantalone requested a meeting on December 13, 2004 with City planner Elise Hug and community representatives. The DGRA was there to reiterate our concerns about the massive size of the building, the lack of true public consultation in the process, the loss of green space, our park deficient neighbourhood, impact on parking and traffic, the landlord's poor relations with tenants and possible rent hikes for existing tenants.

Joe was shocked that the building had grown in size since the initial developer proposal – usually buildings start big and decrease in size once the City planner weighs in. He said he was opposed to the development "in its current form". Elise Hug was then charged with writing a staff report to City Council about the development.



What did the DGRA do next?

The DGRA put together a comprehensive letter and our own planning document to educate the 12 Councillors that would be voting on whether or not to adopt the Hug staff report. We let them

know, again, why we were opposed to the development and our objection with not being heard.

What does the City Planning Report to Community Council say?

Thankfully the proposed road on the site was taken out. The report asked Council not to approve the application while negotiations continued.

Although these are hopeful signs, we feel the report still doesn't adequately address the issues we are most concerned with: community inclusion in negotiations between city planners and the developer, the loss of green space, loss of walkway, size of the building.

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So what happened at Community Council February 8?

A number of us made deputations at Community Council outlining our issues with the development. Some of the requests were:

- to ensure that existing affordable below-market units in the current buildings are protected
- to ensure that the largest possible proportion of new units are also in the affordable range
- to direct the planners to demand that the building decrease significantly in size
- to direct the planners to demand that a significant amount of green space be preserved.
- to include community representatives in negotiations between the city planners and the developers.
- to provide funding to the community to hire a lawyer and planner or alternately for council to hire an outside planner to give us an unbiased report on the application.

Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone made motions to include himself at the negotiating table, and to preserve a walkway in the area as well as to aim towards a density closer to what was permitted by the City at the time of the original buildings. We assume that Pantalone wants to see a greatly reduced development on the site. He told us that the City doesn't give money to community groups for outside counsel. Those motions including those recommendations made by the report all passed.

Meeting with Joe following Community Council

We met with Joe to convince him to include us in the negotiations with the City Planners and the developer. He told us that our place to negotiate was at the OMB. That he would be at City/developer negotiations to ensure that the decrease in density was adhered to.

We also tried to make the case that he make another motion at City Council directing the City Planning department to hire an independent planner. We feel that, given the history and lack of good faith of the City Planners with our community, the City would have a better chance of winning a smaller building at the OMB if a planner unassociated with the history of the project was hired.

We also believe that if an outside planner would be brought in we might have an opportunity at a more favourable report. Joe did not agree and believes strongly that, after a meeting between him, Elise Hug and Chief

Planner Ted Tyndorf, City Planning is now in agreement that they should negotiate a considerably smaller building than the one proposed.

Where does the OMB come in?

The OMB is a supposedly independent body of provincial appointees that sets up a tribunal to settle development disputes. We were all at the OMB pre-hearing on February 1st to declare our interest.

What can you do?

1. **Call Joe Pantalone at 416-392-4009** before the next council meeting this Wednesday, February 16 and let him know you want the City to hire an outside planner.
2. **Call and write letters to City Councillors** before February 16 asking them to support a motion to have the City hire an outside planner. Check your blue pages in the phone book or call one of us at the numbers below and we'll get them for you.
3. **Write newsletter articles.**
4. **Help us deliver the newsletter and other flyers.**
5. **Show up to the OMB as participants** stating why you oppose the building proposal. The hearing begins May 31st – four days are booked so far – but all participants must submit a written statement to the OMB by March 31st. We've asked for an evening session so that those of you who work in the day can still participate.
5. **Help us raise funds** to hire a lawyer to work with us.
6. **If you are a lawyer, help advise us.**
7. **Most importantly, join the DGRA.** We need your support now more than ever. Membership is a mere \$10 and we greatly appreciate any amount you can donate towards our fight at the OMB. We will be doing another membership drive in March.

Thanks to all of you who delivered notices, sent e-mails, faxes and who phoned councillors ahead. You helped convince all councillors that the community supported the position of the group leaders and that you were willing to act in defense of your neighbourhood.

More Information or offers to volunteer

Carol - 416-588-7254 or Sheila - 416-538-3146

DGRA membership Rachel - 416-535-4985

DGRA email thedgra@canoemail.com

City Planner Elise Hug's staff report

www.dufferinpark.ca/neighbourhood/neighbourhood.html