

July 10, 2006

Air Rail Link Update

Friday we wrote to the Minister of the Environment asking for her to appoint a mediator under the Environmental Assessment Act, to help the parties (the Weston Community Coalition and GO Transit) resolve issues around the 'consultation' that is supposed to happen in the development of the Terms of Reference.

There have been a number of issues over the months we have been meeting, but the latest Public Liaison meeting prompted us to write to the Minister. It has been very difficult for us to enter a dialogue with the proponents on the 'meat' of the Terms of Reference. One meeting was spent dealing mainly with 'process' issues, the next with lists of potential routes, the next with a preliminary look at a draft Terms of Reference. There wasn't time to deal with all our questions, so a 4th meeting was held this past Wednesday night. We were astounded to discover the agenda was again 'process' issues, it had been shortened by ½ hour, there wasn't time set aside to discuss the 'meat' of the Terms of Reference, and the proponent refused to schedule another meeting. At their request, we had put our questions and concerns in writing three weeks ago. But none of the GO Transit or Consultant representatives had even read our submissions. In short, it was a farce.

And communication issues continue to dog us. The meeting was only attended by 6 or 7 members of the Committee, of the 20 or so whom GO has deemed are on it. One did not receive notice, and our councillor did not get the notice. We have no idea if other members of the committee chose not to attend, or were not notified.

We were also advised that the deadline for comments on the Terms of Reference is August 11th. Those of you who were at the Faith Sanctuary meeting until the end will know that GO agreed to continue the meeting in September. (Sept 13 at the Faith Sanctuary). But if the deadline is August 11th, what point will that meeting have? And who will attend if they get a letter from GO advising that the deadline is August 11? GO insists that those present at the meeting will be able to comment, but the conflict in dates is obvious to all but them.

And GO keeps insisting that people can get all the information from the website and that it's well advertised. It's not on GO Transit's website, it's on www.georgetownpearsonstudy.ca. There's no link from GO's website. A Google search doesn't find it. And despite insisting that the public notice of the big meeting contained the address, we checked, and it didn't. If you go to their website you will find the summary of the Faith Sanctuary meeting. However, it's in a huge, colourful PDF file, nearly 6 megabytes, so be prepared for a long download if you're on dialup. (A smaller file is available on our website).

We still do not have any reply from either of our letters to Mayor David Miller (April 10 or May 26), nor to our letter to Rona Ambrose, Federal Minister of the Environment, complaining that \$33 Million of federal taxpayers' money was spent on the Air-Rail Link BEFORE the EA was completed, in violation of federal law. We have asked for a meeting with the new provincial Minister of Transportation, Donna Cansfield.

We will continue to keep you posted as developments occur. Please feel free to distribute this to friends and neighbours who don't get our e-mails. If anyone wishes to sign up for our e-mails, send them to the website (www.westoncommunitycoalition.ca) where there is a link to send us an e-mail address. As always as we get new or revised documents, we post them on the website. Our questions and comments on the Terms of Reference are there, as is the reply from the new Federal Minister of Transport, Lawrence Cannon.

Mike Sullivan
Chair
Weston Community Coalition