

WCC Update – June 21, 2007

Mike Sullivan

RESPECT Campaign Public Forum – The Kodak Lands - Monday June 25, 7 pm, York Civic Centre – 2700 Eglinton W. – All are invited!

While the Weston Community Coalition is normally a single-issue organization (stopping Blue 22), we would like to inform you of another issue of interest to the residents of York South-Weston in the coming months. One of the community's last remaining large industrial employers, Kodak, shut its doors some time ago. Many of you drive by the Kodak plant daily. The land upon which the plant sits has been sold (some 52 acres) to developer Metrus. Metrus is responsible for building mainly Big Box retail developments, mainly in the 905 region surrounding Toronto. In the course of discussions with the developer, and Councillors Nunziata and DiGiorgio, it has become apparent that preliminary plans for the land are for some sort of retail complex. The current zoning prohibits housing as part of the development of that land, and requires that it be 'employment' lands.

In the view of many, retail developments, with minimum wage, part-time jobs, are not sufficient replacement jobs for the thousands upon thousands of skilled, high wage jobs lost at the Kodak lands. The riding of York South-Weston is the 2<sup>nd</sup> poorest in Ontario, and a lot of the reason is the steady loss of good-paying industrial jobs with factory closures. We have lost CCM, Massey Harris, Dominion Bridge, Ferranti-Packard, etc. etc., and now the Kodak plant. York South-Weston needs to retain the good-paying industrial job model in places such as this. We're glad it won't be housing (apparently the land is quite polluted, so housing is not an option) but we would like the governments to encourage manufacturing or other forms of industrial jobs rather than merely retail.

Partly to that end, various community groups (Mount Dennis, Silverthorn, Acorn, Toronto Environmental Alliance, Toronto Labour Council, Learning Enrichment Foundation, the Weston Community Coalition, etc.) have gotten together and organized a public forum to discuss this issue in the context of the RESPECT campaign for good jobs, good development, and community respect. The idea for this forum came in part from the community campaign called CORD (Community Organizing for Responsible Development) in the Rexdale area to give resident voices towards the developers of the Woodbine lands. The public forum is this coming Monday, June 25, at 7 pm at the York Civic Centre at 2700 Eglinton Avenue W, just west of Keele. We would encourage as many of you as can make it to come out, listen to various community organizers, and if you can, get involved.

Mike Sullivan  
Chair  
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