

Weston Community Coalition

June 18, 2008

Hi Neighbours,

Our 4th Annual Neighbours' Night Out was a huge success -- Thank You! About 400 of you spent a lovely evening meeting each other, having fun with children, and enjoying a burger, hot dog, and some cool treats. Your donations totalling **\$1088.50**, split between the Weston Heritage Conservation District and the Weston Community Coalition, will go a long way towards keeping our community the wonderful place it is. Thanks to the members of the coalition who donated their time and effort to organize and run this, and to the sponsors who donated food, money and products. Specific donors were – Real Canadian Superstore (food and money), Irving Tissue (paper products), Victory Credit Union (money), Squibb's Stationers (printing and money), Councillor Nunziata (park permit), York South-Weston NDP (Creamsicles), Jerry Dover (desserts), MPP Albanese and MP Tonks (children's activities), Carleton Promotions (buttons). And of course, thanks to the owners of the houses on whose driveways we set up the barbeque, the McBrides and Abbotsford Group. The city would not let us barbeque in the park unless the persons cooking had city-issued food handler certificates, which would have cost far more than we raised. So we barbequed on private property, and you walked over to the park. See you again next year.

It's been a quiet year on the Blue 22 front.

After the election and the cabinet shuffle, the Coalition wrote to Jim Bradley, the Minister of Transportation, copied to John Gerretsen, the Minister of the Environment. We have asked the ministry of Transportation what they intend to do about the 'misleading' statements by GO Transit about the consultation on the Environmental Assessment, and would the ministry provide 'participant funding' for the EA so we can afford to hire our own experts. GO's expert in 'Social, Economic and Cultural' environment is a firm specializing in noise and vibration studies. We think we can do better.

We have asked the ministry of the Environment for a decision on appointing a mediator to the file.

**We have no response from either.**

We asked the same questions of our new MPP, Laura Albanese, to take to the ministers. She too was unable to get specific answers, but more recently she has advised that she is trying to get us a meeting with the minister of transportation.

Meanwhile the government has moved to provide a new and dramatically changed Environmental Assessment process for Transit Projects. The new process will take only 6 months, and **will not allow for the study of alternatives**. In addition, the new process appears to amend the definition of environment to be only the 'natural' environment. This would **seem to exclude consideration of Weston's 'Social, Economic, and Cultural' environment**. It also seems to exclude any private project, or any project not on a list in the regulation, from having to abide by the Environmental Assessment Act at all. We wrote to the Ministry of the Environment during the public comment period for these new regulations, but **we understand it is unlikely that any changes will be made as a result of our concerns**. Though we have asked GO Transit and our MPP, we don't yet know if it is their intention to move from the 'full' study we were promised, to the new EA process. June 17<sup>th</sup>'s exchange in the legislature seems to indicate the government intends to break that promise.

Also there is the issue of Metrolinx and its relationship to the Blue 22 project. Metrolinx is not yet in charge of GO Transit, though that is the ultimate plan. Metrolinx is preparing a transit plan for

all of the GTA and Hamilton. Blue 22 is one of the projects that the government announced it was proceeding with through Metrolinx. Metrolinx has yet to indicate one way or another whether it will recommend completion of this project or changes to it.

Finally the City of Toronto has moved ahead with its 'Transit City' initiatives, and is planning light rail lines on Eglinton (eventually to the airport) and on Jane. While these lines will not be 'rapid' like a subway or like the light rail in Ottawa and Calgary, they will be an improvement over buses, as they will travel somewhat isolated from traffic. The city has no plans to interconnect these lines with the proposed 'Blue 22'.

We are still suggesting to anyone who will listen that the ideal solution is a 10-12 stop above ground (except in Weston, Mount Dennis and the Junction) subway line. Second best choice would be a similar route using light rail vehicles.

### ***The Former KODAK lands***

Another issue the Coalition has been involved with, through our membership in the Mount Dennis Weston Network, is the fate of the 54 acre parcel at Weston and Black Creek, occupied by Kodak Canada for over 100 years.

The issue became 'live' last spring when the landowner advised the community that it wanted to put in a 600,000 square foot retail complex on the land. The reaction of the Network has been consistent – they want the lands preserved for 'employment' uses, as per the city's official plan. They do not believe yet another regional retail complex is necessary (Crossroads and Stockyards are nearby) or desirable. Weston and Mount Dennis have lost thousands of good jobs with dozens of plant closures in the past 30 years. Many of those closures were simply because the land was more valuable as housing or retail.

The network has suggested that the land be designated as a centre of excellence for 'green' manufacturing. So, design, development, and production of ecologically friendly new technologies would be ideal.

So far there has been no word from the landowner. But various city officials are warm to the ideas, and Councillor Nunziata is sponsoring a study of the employment lands throughout her ward.

Meanwhile a fight in Leslieville over a similar-sized retail development is being watched closely. A developer there wants to convert 'employment lands' to retail, complete with 1700 parking spaces. The city is opposed, but it is now before the Ontario Municipal Board.

### ***The Coalition***

The Weston Community Coalition was formed over 3 years ago to give voice to citizens' concerns over plans to put a high-speed rail link, with trains every 7.5 minutes, through our community. We meet on an as-needed basis, trying to keep pressure on the federal and provincial governments to abandon or change those plans. We have also been active on other issues, host a barbeque on Neighbours' Night Out, and participate in the Santa Clause Parade. If you'd like to join and be active, or just get our updates, e-mail [info@westoncommunitycoalition.ca](mailto:info@westoncommunitycoalition.ca).

If you want to read more, several years worth of documents are at [www.westoncommunitycoalition.ca](http://www.westoncommunitycoalition.ca)  
We'll continue to try to keep you informed,

Mike Sullivan  
Chair

Weston Community Coalition.