



Belltown Neighbourhood Association

News

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May 2012

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Belltown Neighbourhood Association Revival

The public discussion earlier this year regarding the reallocation of funds slated for renovations for the Belltown Dome (*more on this elsewhere in this newsletter*) prompted a lively e-mail discussion among a number Belltown residents to revive the former Belltown Neighbourhood Association, in part to better inform the community on issues.

The result was a meeting held last March 20 at Dr. F.J. Macdonald School on Ahearn Street, of some 30 Belltown residents, facilitated by Bay Ward Councillor Mark Taylor. There was general agreement that having a community association for the Belltown neighbourhood (some 350 homes, from Britannia Park to Andrew Haydon Park, between Carling Avenue and the Ottawa River), would be a good thing.

The main focus of discussion was the need to provide a forum for community information and discussion of local issues, from the late-night noise from Belltown Dome users disturbing the neighbourhood, to traffic and parking issues, the status of the Views and Vistas City/NCC study, better relations with the OCH community of Britannia Woods, economic development of Carling Avenue, the floodplain issue affecting Belltown (*more about this elsewhere in the newsletter*), among others.

A steering committee for the Belltown Neighbourhood Association was elected at the meeting, composed of Jérôme Nantel (Haughton Ave.), Ranjit Bose (Haughton Ave.), Alex Cullen (Burland Str.), Russell Latham (Haughton Ave.), Maria Opera (Haughton Ave.), and Ryan Palmer (Oakley Ave.), with the task of developing a constitution for the BNA.

To date the steering committee has met twice, elected Jérôme Nantel as chair of the committee, and has established a Google Group “Belltown Neighbourhood Association” - to subscribe to this please send an e-mail to belltown+subscribe@googlegroups.com.

Thank you!

To the over 30 men, women and children who participated in last April 28's Spring-Clean-The-Capital clean-up in Belltown

26 Burland, the OMB and Floodplains

A recent Ontario Municipal Board decision regarding a property in Belltown has brought home the restrictions facing those properties in Belltown on the Ottawa River 100-year floodplain. Approximately 80 homes in Belltown (from Oakley to Grandeur, close to the NCC bikepath) are on the 100-year floodplain, as determined by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, the provincial agency responsible for, among other things, controlling development on floodplains (a heritage from Hurricane Hazel in 1954).

The 26 Burland Street case arose from a purchase of a vacant lot (26 Burland) and the desire of the purchaser to build on this lot. There are houses on either side of this lot, including houses behind and across the street as well as on either side.

According to the RVCA, this lot is on the Ottawa River's 100-year floodplain (i.e. the land where a flood is expected to occur once in 100 years). For those curious, the NCC bikepath (a former CPR rail bed that runs along the river's edge) does not reach the height necessary to stop the 100-year flood (it is about 30 cm short), as well, there is an open culvert under the bikepath to permit stormwater access to the Ottawa River (which is stopped up by the City every spring during the melt).

The purchaser of 26 Burland applied for a building permit and was told that, while the zoning permitted a residential dwelling, the floodplain policy of the City (consistent with Provincial Policy Statement) forbade new development on a floodplain. She then applied to the Committee of Adjustment (a City tribunal), which granted the purchaser a minor variance to allow her to proceed. The RVCA appealed the CoA decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (a provincial tribunal) as inconsistent with the provincially-mandated floodplain policies. The RVCA appeal was upheld, meaning that no building can be constructed on this vacant lot.

This was a topic of discussion at a recent BNA steering committee meeting, where we heard from a representative of the RVCA on the implications of this matter. The current 80 or so homes in Belltown on the 100-year floodplain are grandfathered and some minor expansions (requiring RVCA approval) can occur, but no severances or large-scale additions. However, it is possible to apply for a re-designation to a “two-zone” floodplain policy ... *(please see next page)*

26 Burland, the OMB and Floodplains

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which could ease some development restrictions for those on the “flood fringe” zone of the floodplain (but not for those on the “floodway” zone of the floodplain). This two-zone approach, however, would still not permit severances to create new lots nor the construction of higher-density buildings. Further, it would require a study by the RVCA to determine what properties would qualify as “flood fringe”.

Some may be aware of the floodproofing initiatives in Britannia Village, where 99 homes lie on the 100-year floodplain. There the RVCA and the City are pursuing a project to build a berm to protect these homes from the 100-year flood. Upon the construction of this berm, the City is expected to develop a special study area to see which of the current development restrictions could be lifted. Folks should note that this is a project jointly funded by the City and the affected homeowners, whose contribution would come from a local improvement levy assessed on their property taxes over 10 years. However, other projects, such as in Brewer Park and Windsor Park along the Rideau River, the City paid for the bulk of the floodproofing costs there.

The BNA steering committee believes that the 26 Burland OMB decision to prevent a new home being built in our established neighbourhood is a “wake up” call for the Belltown community, particularly for the 80 properties on the 100-year floodplain.

Is there an interest in pursuing this matter further—hold a public meeting, find out our options (floodproof the bike path? seek floodfringe designation? other solutions?) - please let us know.

Belltown Dome Update and Issues

Earlier this year Bay Ward Councillor Mark Taylor surprised many by moving a motion at the City’s Community & Protective Services Committee to re-allocate \$1.067 million in funds previously approved for the renovation of the Belltown Dome (the indoor rink facility on Haughton Ave.) to a new, yet unspecified, project for the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre. The previous renovations project for the Dome had involved replacing aging equipment and the addition of new change rooms, washroom facilities, and a community meeting room. This latter feature had been controversial in the immediate community.

While Councillor Taylor’s motion was successful, the debate revealed that the City intended to maintain the Belltown Dome as a rink facility and would take the necessary maintenance activities in order to accomplish this. As well, Councillor Taylor undertook to provide the opportunity for public consultation for the yet un-specified project for the Ron Kolbus-Lakeside Centre, some time in the future.

One issue that is a continuing irritant for Belltown Dome neighbours is the loud noise made by some users in the parking lot, following the conclusion of their games. Beer parties are not permitted on City property (and that includes the parking lot). The BNA steering committee is seeking to obtain a list of user groups and their schedules in order to link noise complaints with the appropriate group, for appropriate follow-up by City officials.

Noise complaints can be made anytime by calling 3-1-1 or emailing 311@ottawa.ca.

ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CAN DO FOR YOU, ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COMMUNITY!

The Belltown Neighbourhood Association is under a new direction—to inform and serve the community. To be effective, though, requires input and participation by people living here. We are interested (and hope you are) in making progress on these issues: neighbourhood security and good neighbour relations; the future and use of the Belltown Dome; the floodplain along the Ottawa River and how it affects us; understanding the City and NCC rules on the Views & Vistas along the bikepath; economic development on Carling Avenue; traffic and parking.

If you are interested in participating in any of these activities, please drop us a line! E-mail us at association@belltown.ca. And get your news by e-mail by joining our Google Group! Send us an e-mail to belltown+subscribe@googlegroups.com.

Make the right call!

Reports have been received about people entering unlocked cars to steal items—two incidents were reported on Haughton Avenue, and two on Kempster, in the last week of April. It is important to ensure that the police are informed of these activities, and that you keep your car doors locked. Here are the police phone numbers to remember:

9-1-1—Life-threatening Emergency or Crime in Progress

613 230-6211—All Other Emergencies

613 236-1222 x7300—Call Centre to report Theft, Property Damage, Missing Person

613 236-1222—All Other Inquiries; Community Police Centres