

January 17, 2014

## Greater Beaches Neighbourhood Association

### Update and Plans for the New Year

[www.gbna-toronto.com](http://www.gbna-toronto.com)    [info@gbna-toronto.com](mailto:info@gbna-toronto.com)

Hello Friends and Neighbours.

Before the Christmas break, we saw the disappointing OMB decision for Queen and Woodbine. At the same time, in its December 17 issue, the Beach Metro News ran a wonderful article by Matthew Kellway, MP for Beaches/East York. He wrote, “The Beach that is my home was created by everybody. But now, it is a place being prescribed by others”

This extended GBNA newsletter is all about what we, with your help, are doing about this.

In the following sections you will read about:

1. Our comments regarding the Shell Station OMB decision and the '200 Woodbine' OMB appeal
2. Our continued work with City Planning staff and Councillor McMahon to help realize the vision for Queen Street (as outlined in the Urban Design Guidelines) by making the City's planning tools more robust at the OMB
3. Our input to the recent provincial consultation regarding its land-use planning and appeal policies
4. Our exciting agenda for 2014: staying the course, expanding in new areas, staying relevant in our community and to our grassroots

#### **1. The Shell Station Site and '200 Woodbine'**

The decision in the OMB appeal respecting the Shell Station site was very disappointing for the community. However, we believe that GBNA's participation in the appeal to oppose the development was an important initiative that did result in many positives.

- It enhanced our standing with City staff, council and other decision makers as a determined, focused and credible voice for the Greater Beach Community.
- It raised awareness in the community of the development issues facing us all.
- It raised the commitment of many residents who became energized, giving their time and raising funds for opposing the proposed development at the OMB
- A number of the GBNA concerns were acknowledged by the OMB chair, requiring several positive changes to be made to the exterior, broadening the sidewalk, eliminating the building overhang above the first floor and requiring exterior building materials that reflect the surrounding.

### 200 Woodbine

We are immensely grateful to all those who contributed to the 'Shell Station' effort, and we will build on the momentum that these caring people have created. We are also grateful to Wood Bull LLP, who are again representing GBNA, pro bono, at the OMB in the 200 Woodbine appeal. GBNA is working with our lawyers to oppose the appeal at the OMB starting February 24. Look for an update in the near future and please support GBNA as you have done before.

## 2 Working with the City

We are consulting with our lawyers, Councillor McMahon and senior City Planning staff as to our next steps. Several extended meetings have taken place at City Hall where GBNA is urging:

- that the Official Plan be amended to formally recognize the Queen St. E. Urban Design Guidelines to give them enhanced status in the review of development applications by the City and in appeals to the OMB
- that Council sticks with its commitment to the guidelines
- that Councillor McMahon be a continued strong voice in their defense
- that incremental development through one-off exceptions IS NOT GOOD PLANNING

- that we believe the Vision for Queen St. E. as outlined in the UDG reflects the most appropriate community view of how to move forward with acceptable anticipated redevelopment

Everyone should know that the GBNA is not standing against things, we are FOR what is better. GBNA members are Greater Beach residents. We care about property value, about retail health, about economics. That is why we favour intelligent, properly planned growth and development.

### **3. GBNA input to the Provincial Land Use Planning Consultation**

During the fall of 2014, the Province conducted a public consultation about aspects of the provincial land use land-use planning system. GBNA participated in the Toronto public meeting of the provincial consultation, and made a written submission to the consultation.

Our submission made a number of recommendations to increase effective participation and engagement of local residents in the land use planning system.

Regrettably, however, the consultation largely excluded the role and process of the OMB, despite the fact that the OMB plays a significant role in Ontario's land use planning system. As our submission notes, the OMB may, on appeal, substitute its opinion for that of municipal councils, and local citizens and resident associations are, in many cases, effectively precluded from participation in OMB appeals because of significant legal and expert witness expenses. GBNA is pursuing OMB reform with other parties and MPP Michael Prue.

The GBNA submission is available on our **website** [gbna-toronto.com](http://gbna-toronto.com)

### **4. Our 2014 agenda and the new GBNA Sustainability Initiative.**

Following our Annual General Meeting in December, we are thrilled and excited to announce that we have formed a team that will expand our land-use planning focus with the highly related questions about sustainable, resilient community building. The team is headed by Jiri Skopek, long time Beach resident, architect and sustainability expert. Involved, among others, are Birgit Siber, Ronn Stevenson and Simone Skopek. This group is actively creating a list of actionable priorities that align with maintaining a strong, healthy and vibrant Greater Beach community.

We are also planning to expand the capacity of our web site in exciting ways to be highly inclusive for a myriad of Beach organizations. Stay tuned for more on this.

### **Be engaged!**

GBNA and our member Resident Associations (a list follows below) also need you!! We want to have a good number of people who are involved with grassroots activity on an ongoing basis. If you would like to be involved or have an idea for the community, please let us know at [info@gbna-toronto.com](mailto:info@gbna-toronto.com). Your presence and ideas are welcome. Engagement is both enjoyable and rewarding.

The GBNA is dedicated to making sure that the voice of this community is heard, and that policy makers give meaning to their words.

We wish everyone a very Happy New Year!

Jan Hykamp, Neil Sinclair, Hans Looije, Uwe Sehmrau, Michael Reade (2014 Board members) and the extended GBNA team.

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### **Who we are – Our Purpose**

To build strong working relationships with those, such as city planners and our GTA Councillor, whose decisions have an impact on our community.

To continually raise our already strong credibility as the voice for an engaged community so as to influence policy decisions impacting our community.

To encourage, with the member Resident Associations that support us, a strong sense of community in the Greater Beach area, so that the changes that are occurring are ones that make us stronger and healthier.

To support only well considered growth and development that enhances all aspects of the community: economic, social and environmental, for the long term.

### **GBNA member groups**

GBNA is an umbrella association with the following members:

Beach Triangle RA  
Kew Beach NA  
Toronto Beach East RA  
Balmy Beach RA  
Beach Waterfront CA  
Norwood Park RA  
Friends of Glen Davis Ravine

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