
NOVAE RES URBIS

NEWS OF THE CITY • TORONTO
VOL 5 • NO. 47 • FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2001

In this Issue of Novae Res Urbis

Supportive housing on Danforth.....	2
Waterfront board named.....	2
TTC bus order will preserve routes.....	3
Industrial protection?.....	3
Plants react to Toronto's salty road runoff.....	4
Hall: Leadership is key.....	5
Development News.....	5
Ontario Municipal Board.....	6
Mark these dates.....	8
City People.....	8

Published by NRU PUBLISHING INC
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Provincial demolition bill wins support

Provincial MPP **Michael Bryant's** Private Bill curbing apartment demolitions in Toronto won a surprise victory this week. The provincial **Private Bills Committee** supported the bill in a 4 to 1 vote, that could help protect existing affordable housing stock in the city. Bryant had sponsored the bill, which resulted from a resolution he proposed to City Council that passed unanimously two years ago.

In 2000, Ontario lost 631 units to conversion or demolition according to the **Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation**. Currently, there are over 2000 units in Toronto threatened with demolition or conversion.

A Private Bill differs from a Private Member's Bill, in that a particular group applies for permission for a specific exemption from existing legislation. Most Private Bills are passed at Committee, then ratified in the House without debate. Therefore, the Bill could still be blocked if the legislature rejects the Committee's support of the Bill. Only two Private Bills in the history of Ontario have been rejected.

On the other side of the coin, the City still has yet to hear back on its appeal of OPA 2. The amendment aims to protect rental housing from condominium conversion and encourages the replacement of rental housing as part of significant redevelopment proposals. OPA 2 does not address the demolition of rental housing where a developer does not require planning approval for an increase in height or density. When adopted, it was appealed to the OMB and found to be

(Continued on page 2)

Mayor welcomes ally to council

Mayor **Mel Lastman** welcomed the newly elected councillor in Ward 31 (*Beaches-East York*) on December 4. **Michael Tziretas**, an auditor with the provincial **Ministry of Finance** until he won the December 3 by-election to replace **Michael Prue** by a hair, thanked his family and supporters as he took his seat in council.

Tziretas, who beat out his closest rival, NDP candidate **Janet Davis**, by only 54 votes, will be a solid Lastman ally on council. At 34, he was a one-term councillor on the former East York council from 1994 to 1997, where he sat on the budget committee and supported flat-lining property taxes.

Campaign manager **David Anderson** has been hired on as Tziretas' executive assistant, while **Justin Van Dette** and **Gord Crann**, both campaign insiders, have joined the office as administrative assistant and constituency assistant, respectively. Tziretas' campaign was supported by the power

(Continued on page 3)

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Supportive housing on Danforth

The Toronto East York panel of the city's **Committee of Adjustment** approved a supportive housing project slated for 777 Danforth Avenue on December 5. The item had been adjourned during a November 21 meeting upon requests from neighbouring residents and businesses.

The **Supportive Housing Coalition** plans to renovate an existing building on the site to create 29 small one-bedroom units targeted to people with mental illness. Because the building has been on the site since before the current zoning by-law was put in place, the project required approval for minor variances. These included shortening parking spaces by inches, increasing the gross floor area for residential use, maintaining mixed use on the Danforth frontage, and having less than standard outdoor landscaped area. The group, which owns and runs programs in 40 similar properties across the city, believes the Danforth is an ideal location because it is close to the subway and to other amenities.

The housing plan has the support of the local councillor, **Jack Layton**, as well as some local residents, who believe that it will be an improvement over the current use, a second-floor billiard hall. However, the project has been strenuously opposed by local residents and businesses who don't believe the Danforth is the appropriate location for supportive housing and are concerned about the impact it will have on the area.

Sue Zindro, president of the Greektown BIA, told *Novae Res Urbis* after the meeting that her group will appeal the committee's decision. "We think it is not the right place for that kind of facility," she said. "It goes beyond the variance issue. We're going to hire a specialist and we're going to appeal it to the Ontario Municipal Board."

For **Joan White**, executive director of the Supportive Housing Coalition, this kind of opposition is nothing new. She told *NRU* it is based on the stigma of mental illness and people's fear of others with the disease. "It is sad," she said. "But this is par for the course."

The group is being provided both capital and operating funds for the project from the provincial **Ministry of Health and Long-term Care**. •

Waterfront board named

The board of the **Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation** has been named by the federal and provincial governments and the **City of Toronto**. Each government appointed to the new board directors of the **Toronto Port Authority**, with whom the city is involved in a court case over land transfers from the port to the city in the 1990s.

Joining chair **Robert Fung**, named last summer, are federal appointees **Marilyn Knox**, the nutrition president at **Nestle Canada Inc**, **Peter Smith**, president and co-owner of **Andrin Ltd.** and chair of the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**, and **Robert Wright**, a Toronto lawyer and director of the Toronto Port Authority.

Provincial appointees, named by the **Ontario Superbuild Corporation**, are **Bill Farlinger**, chair of **Ontario Power Generation Inc.**, **James Ginou**, Tory fundraiser and director of the Toronto Port Authority, and **Ralph Lean**, senior partner at **Cassels Brock & Blackwell** and a director of the city's 2008 Olympic bid.

The city named **Murray Chusid**, also its appointee to the Toronto Port Authority, **Tony Dionisio**, business manager of the **Universal Workers Union** (local 183), and **Mark Wilson**, an **IBM** executive and chair of the **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's** Don watershed regeneration council. •

Provincial demolition (from page 1)

"illegal and invalid." In September, Toronto appeared before the **Superior Court** against the OMB decision, along with the cities of Ottawa and Hamilton.

Ultimately, to protect affordable rental housing, protection of existing buildings from both demolition and conversion is needed. •

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TTC bus order will preserve routes

After months of anxiety, **TTC Chief General Manager Rick Ducharme** could breathe easier last Wednesday afternoon after city council finally approved the purchase of 220 new buses, even without the promise of federal cash to cover one-third of the \$113 million price tag. The TTC will only spend \$600,000 in 2002 on the bus order, with the rest coming due when the buses are delivered in 2003 and 2004.

Ducharme had been hoping for approval at the November council meeting but was thwarted when the budget advisory committee deferred the request pending a meeting with federal **Transport Minister David Collenette**. Then, in late November, the budget committee recommended only two-thirds of the TTC request, which would have left the system short of buses by early 2004 and the Commission needing to cut routes. The TTC will order the 40-foot low-floor diesel buses from **Orion Bus Industries** in **Mississauga**.

"I have never run into so many road blocks and so much double talk in my whole life," **Mayor Mel Lastman** told council about dealing with the federal government on transit funding. Nonetheless, he orchestrated an about-face on the issue, deciding to go ahead with the order without Ottawa. **Budget Chief David Shiner** scrambled to put forward a new proposal on the floor of council to replace the one that had come forward from his own committee.

"They changed their hearts, I guess," Ducharme told *Novae Res Urbis* with a broad grin after climbing down the stairs in the council chamber to shake hands with TTC **Chair Brian Ashton**.

Along with the bus purchase, council voted to set up a working group to get money for transit from the senior levels of government. The group includes Ashton, TTC vice-chair **Mario Silva**, **Joe Pantelone**, chair of the planning and transportation committee, **Councillor Paul Sutherland** **Councillor David Miller** and Shiner. •

Industrial protection?

At Council this week, the long running debate over the future of the New Toronto Secondary Plan surfaced again. This time, debate turned to the need to develop a city-wide policy for the protection of industrial lands. That famous U.S. city that Toronto staffers love to compare to Toronto - Chicago, has laws protecting its industrial lands from competition with residential housing, but as of yet, the debate continues on this side of the border.

The debate comes at an interesting time, with the city announcing yesterday that a resolution had been reached with **Tribute Communities** regarding its development at **St. Clair Avenue West** and **Weston Road** next to the New York Pork abattoir. The lands had been rezoned five years ago from industrial to residential. The abattoir will now move to a new location outside of the city.

No resolution has been reached regarding the New Toronto Secondary Plan. City staff continue to recommend the introduction of residential housing in the area, while local companies and the Economic Development Committee are working toward the protection of the existing industries.

Industry continues to move, while site specific issues such as New Toronto are continually debated. The resolution of these issues with a city-wide policy remains to be seen. •

Mayor welcomes ally (from page 1)

brokers in and around city hall, including **Deputy Mayor Case Ootes** and lobby firms **Urban Intelligence** and **Sussex Strategy Group**. He also had help from councillors **Betty Disero**, **Brad Duguid**, **Paul Sutherland**, **Sherene Shaw**, **David Soknacki**, **Norm Kelly** and **Lorenzo Berardinetti**, as well as Liberal MPP **George Smitherman** and MP **Alan Tonks**.

Tziretas was appointed to city committees and ABCs vacated by Prue, including the community services committee and the board of health. •

Plants react to Toronto's salty road runoff

The federal government is poised to list road salt as a toxic substance after scientists concluded it is harmful to plant and animal life. The **City of Toronto** is working on measures to control its use of road salt in the winter by improving weather forecasting to reduce salt spreading when it is unnecessary and by improving salt distribution technology.

The city now uses about 150,000 tonnes of salt every year on roads, sidewalks and at bus stops. Environmentalists have noticed the impact of road salt in places such as the Don Valley, where some plants are flourishing that you would expect to see in salty marshes near an ocean. And according to **Kevin Mercer** of **Riversides**, a non-profit environmental group, a bigger problem is what doesn't grow because of the salt. "Everything native doesn't grow," he pointed out. "The best place to see it is beside the northbound Don Valley Parkway exit at Bayview-Bloor. It is white, packed earth, even in summer."

Charles Kingsley, owner of **Ontario Native Plants** told *Novae Res Urbis* a plant known as the rayless aster has flourished in parts of southern Ontario, despite the fact that it is a species that typically grows in brackish environments, such as the one

around James Bay. "A lot of salt tolerant plants are doing better and better," he said, because of road salt deposits. As a late blooming annual, which seeds itself every year and tends to move to the most hospitable conditions, the fact the aster is growing in certain spots shows there are persistent salt levels in the soil late into the summer. Kingsley has seen it in the Don Valley and also said it is "all over Downsview," where his store is located, in part because there is a lot of driving surface and a clay soil that holds in the salt.

A more invasive species because it grows tall and wide, a large grass known as *phragmites australis*, has now been naturalized inland in road ditches also because of road salt, despite being a coastal plant. "I'd love to see salt reduced enormously on our roads," Kingsley said.

If the federal government goes ahead with the designation of road salt as toxic, which would happen sometime next year, Ottawa would have a further two years to develop measures to reduce the impact of road salt. Kingsley said that poly-carbonate studs on car tires, currently not allowed in Ontario but used in other provinces, would be a step toward reducing salt use here. •

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Joint Planning and Transportation Committee and Community Services Committee

The joint meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee and the Community Services Committee will consider the following item at Toronto City Hall on Wednesday December 12 at 9:30 a.m. in Committee Room 1.

Enactment of a Municipal Shelter by-law – City Council referred the reports to the joint committee, which included a review of existing guidelines for the selection of emergency shelter sites, including internal safety and school issues, and formal guidelines to be used in the selection of sites. A report addressing the appropriate minimum separation between municipal shelters will also be before the Committee for comment. •

• DEVELOPMENT NEWS •

Long term care facility on West Mall

Gull Construction Co. and Marbrook Investments Ltd. have submitted rezoning and site plan applications for **505 The West Mall**. The applications would permit the development of a nine-storey, 10,130 sq. m. long term care facility in addition to the existing apartment building. The facility would hold 186 beds. The 0.82 ha. site is located on the east side of The West Mall, south of **Holiday Drive**. Consultant for the project is **John D. Rogers & Associates**.

Addition for plant on Steinway Blvd.

Signet Development Corporation and Apotex Realty Inc. has submitted an application for site plan control for **50 Steinway Boulevard**. The application for the site near the southwest corner of **Steeles Avenue** and **Signal Hill Avenue**, would permit a three-storey, 34,023 sq. m. addition to the existing pharmaceutical plant.

Residential condo for Bloor West

A condominium application has been submitted by **1308684 Ontario Limited** for **3085 Bloor Street West**. The proposal is for a six-storey, 83-unit residential apartment building on the 0.37 ha. site at the southwest corner of Bloor Street West and **Thompson Avenue**. The application is in conjunction with approved OPA, rezoning and site plan applications. Consultants for the project are **R. Avis Surveying Inc. and Bratty & Partners**.

Hall: Leadership is key

Former Mayor **Barbara Hall** says leadership is key to planning and building vital communities that don't produce crime. Hall, who is the chair of the **National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention** spoke at a recent **Canadian Urban Institute** breakfast.

Hall, in explaining some of the 2000 crime prevention projects initiated under the federal program, perhaps hinted at her future bid for mayor. She said that to reach the goal of making Toronto the safest city in North America, "all starts with leadership."

Quality of life in Toronto has always been one of its biggest advantages, which according to Hall we are in danger of squandering. She added that crime prevention should be of equal importance as enforcement. Of concern to Hall is the fact that Toronto is presently moving in the opposite direction with a lack of access to public resources such as school gyms that were constructed with taxpayers money, but because of cost constraints, often sit empty. "We need to address these issues with the school board, the city and the province to figure out how to get the doors open," said Hall. "The relationship needs to be close and viewed as a partnership, and I don't see that happening." She added that in a time of financial pressure, "we can't afford to have the municipality and the school board working in separate silos."

"To resolve these problems we need more effective leadership and less political infighting," concluded Hall. •

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• ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD •

Spadina and St. Clair intensification continues Point tower permitted

In a decision issued November 28 board member **Susan Rogers** allowed amended appeals by **1160963 Ontario Inc.** for OPA, rezoning, site plan and a permit to injure and destroy trees for **330 Spadina Road**. The applications would allow an 18-storey, 54 metre high residential point tower on the 0.69 ha. site at the southwest corner of Spadina Road and **St. Clair Avenue West**. The site is on the existing visitor parking lot for the 23-storey apartment building on the south end of the site. It is directly across from the St. Clair Reservoir and just east of the St. Clair West subway station. A mix of low and high rise residential buildings characterizes this area. The proposed tower would contain 109 residential units in a rounded tower with a footprint of 713 sq. m. and 54.5 per cent of the existing landscaped open space would be maintained. The proposal also includes 149 new parking spaces below grade. The **City of Toronto** refused all of the applications. The official plan amendment is required to permit an increase in the density of the site from 2 times to 4.25 times the lot area. The city and the **Spadina St. Clair Neighbourhood Committee**, opposed the proposal saying it was an inappropriate built form for the site, being too intense, and too large in height, massing and scale. The board identified appropriateness of residential intensification, built form, and site constraints as the key issues to be addressed.

On analysis, the opponents excluded the area to the north and west of Spadina and St. Clair from the assessment of the character of the area. The board disagreed, and found that the built form of this area is relevant to defining its character. The entire area is subject to the policies of Metro Plan. The site is designated for high density residential uses in the Bathurst-St. Clair Secondary Plan, and is the only area in this plan so designated. Opponents indicated that the board should not permit any substantial deviation from the density provision of 2 times the lot area. The board found this request difficult, since the site is currently developed at a 2.5 density and was advised that additional residential development could be accommodated on site. Evidence showed that residential densities ranged from less than 1 to 5 times density along St. Clair north of the site. The board determined that the level of intensification would be based on appropriate compatibility with the general area and the adjacent properties, as well as built form. The board found that the site was appropriate for resi-

dential intensification, with support from all of the applicable policies. Opponents also argued that any intensification on the site should conform to the 14 metre height limit, which permits a five to six storey building. The board found that the proposed point tower design was the not appropriate built form for the site. Concerns were expressed over existing traffic problems in the area. Therefore, the board said that car ownership in the development should not be facilitated or encouraged, considering its close proximity to a subway station. As a result, the board decided that the proposal should not include the 29 additional parking spaces required to bring the existing building into conformity with the zoning by-law.

Concern was raised regarding the shadowing created from the building, particularly on the St. Clair Reservoir Park during certain times of the year. The creation of the shadow was attributed to the height of the building and its proximity to the street. The board found that the existing building had a relationship of 1.8:1 to the street and the proposed building would have a relationship of 2:1. As a result, the board found that a more appropriate height, considering the need for a transition between the existing building and the buildings on St. Clair would be a height of 45 metres, rather than the 53.87 metres proposed. This will have less of a shadow impact on the park, and create approximately a 1.6:1 building height to street relationship. Solicitors **Stephen Diamond** and **Cynthia MacDougall (McCarthy Tetrault)** represented 1160963 Ontario Inc. **Lawrence Darkes** and **Sharon Haniford** were the solicitors for the City of Toronto. Solicitor **Barnet Kussner (WeirFoulds)** was the solicitor for the Spadina St. Clair Neighbourhood Committee. (See OMB Case No. PL000933.)

(Continued on page 7)



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OMB (from page 6)

Hearing set for resolution of Winchester Square

In a decision issued November 27, board member **Marilyn Eger** was updated on outstanding matters in the appeal by **Rose Park Howard Investments Limited** regarding applications for rezoning, and site plan for vacant lands in Winchester Square, bounded by **Wellesley Street East, Ontario Street, Carlton Street and Bleecker Street** including **405 Sherbourne Street**. The parties are continuing to work towards finalizing a draft by-law and other required agreements. Confirmation was to be provided that no part of the proposed building would protrude into the easement for parking, resolving issues with the **Toronto Racquet Club**. Confirmation was also needed that the required financial arrangements with the **Hugh Garner Co-op** were completed. The two-day hearing is scheduled to start January 3, 2002. Solicitor **Tim Bermingham (Blake, Cassels & Graydon)** represents Rose Park Howard Investments. **Sharon Haniford** is the solicitor for the **City of Toronto**. Solicitor **Marion Hoffer (Shibley Righton)** represents the **Toronto District School Board**. **J. Church** represents the Toronto Racquet Club. **B. Lewis** represents the Hugh Garner Co-op. (See *OMB Case No. PL911855*.)

Hearing set for retirement development

In a pre-hearing decision issued November 27, board member **Calvin Beach** allowed **Oakwood Retirement Communities Inc.** to make the application for official plan amendment and rezoning for **2245 Lawrence Avenue West**. The applications by Oakwood are for land owned by the **Toronto District School Board**, and at issue was whether Oakwood could bring a matter before the Board regardless of its interest in the land. The applications were to permit the development of a 25,251 sq. m. senior's retirement complex consisting of a 192-bed long-term care facility, a 192-bed retirement home and a 54-unit seniors apartment. The city did not approve the amendments within the statutory time. The **Humber Heights of Etobicoke Ratepayers** opposed the development. At the time of the pre-hearing, the city had not taken a position for or against the proposal, and was awaiting direction from City Council. The ratepayers hinted at asking for an adjournment since they have or will institute a court action against the school board. According to the ratepayers' counsel,

the school board's process regarding release of its site "was improper, it did not follow its own rules and therefore there was procedural unfairness." The board understood that if the ratepayers are successful in their court action, Oakwood would have no interest in the land and therefore could not pursue its application and appeal. Oakwood opposed the call for an adjournment and argued its right to be an applicant. Currently, it leases the land from the school board. The board found that the *Planning Act* refers to an application from a person or public body, not an owner or lessee. Therefore, it was determined that a person or entity other than the owner can apply for an amendment. Oakwood filed a draft procedural order. The hearing was set for 15 days beginning January 28, 2002. Solicitor **Gordon Whicher** represents the City of Toronto. **Jeffrey Davies** and **Michael Melling (McMillan Binch)** are the solicitors for Oakwood. Solicitors **Dennis Trinaistich (McMillan Binch)** and **Bruce McMinn** represent the ratepayers. (See *OMB Case No. PL010690*.) •

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Mark These Dates

Friday December 7

Public forum on water privatization, sponsored by the **Council of Canadians** Metro Hall, 55 John St., 7 p.m. Call 416-462-3128.

Sunday December 9

Public forum on affordable housing, sponsored by the **Toronto Society of Architects**, Design Exchange, 234 Bay St., 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Call 416-778-4934.

Tuesday December 11

How to build rental housing, seminar sponsored by the **Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association**, Westin Prince Hotel, 900 York Mills Road, Toronto, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Call 416-391-1997.

Lecture on New York garment district, sponsored by the **University of Toronto**, Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2125, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. E-mail: l.veronis@utoronto.ca

Open House on Mimico Waterfront Linear Park, sponsored by the **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority**, Polish Alliance Hall, 2282 Lakeshore Blvd. West, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5246.

CITY PEOPLE

Joe Pennachetti has been appointed Toronto's chief financial officer and treasurer, and will join the city's administration on January 21, 2002. Currently Pennachetti is treasurer and commissioner of finance in **Peel Region**, where he has served since 1995. Prior to that, Pennachetti held the same position in the **Region of York**.

Margaret Fischer is to be interim city solicitor beginning February 6th to coincide with the retirement of current solicitor **Ossie Doyle**. The city has begun its search for a new city solicitor. Fischer is currently director of real estate in the city's legal department.

Bryan Hill is to be senior corporate management and policy consultant in the city's CAO's office, beginning January 2, 2002. Hill is currently director of policy and research at the **Greater Toronto Services Board**.

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Annual subscription rate is \$269.
Complimentary trial subscriptions are available.
Advertising rates available upon request.

NOVAE RES URBIS is not to be redistributed without the written consent of the publisher.

NOVAE RES URBIS is published 50 times a year by fax or e-mail by NRU Publishing Inc
12 Mercer Street, Suite 400
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1H3
Tel: 416.260.1304 Fax: 416.979.2707

Anna Pace is to be senior consultant in intergovernmental relations in the city's CAO's office, beginning December 10, 2001. Pace is currently program manager in the transportation planning division of the city's Planning Department.

John Downing has been appointed honorary president, **Fred Finlayson** first vice-president and **Councillor Doug Holyday** second vice-president to the Board of Governors of **Exhibition Place** for a term of office expiring October 10, 2002. •