

TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AINSLIE WOOD/WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.

SEPT. 20, 2010

WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

President John Wigle called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

President's Report (John Wigle)

Welcome to the 12th annual general meeting of the AWWCA. The board of directors chose a different venue for three reasons: first we wanted to "show the flag" in Ainslie Wood; second we wanted the AGM to be more accessible to our members in Ainslie Wood; third, in place of the rock-hard pews of the often-sweltering Dalewood School Auditorium, the board thought that the cushioned seats of the air-conditioned sanctuary of Westside Baptist Church would be a pleasant change of pace. So be comfortable, but as my Sunday school teacher said, "Behave."

On your behalf I thank the following persons: Reverend Dave Steimers and his congregation for being out gracious hosts; Water Solutions for donating cool water and Andrew for his assistance yesterday and tonight; Angela Tirone, our recording secretary, for co-ordinating food donations this year to the Salvation Army food bank; and Reverend John Smith and his congregation at St. George's Reformed Episcopal Church for permitting the board to hold monthly meetings in their hall.

I would like to introduce our invited guests: Dr. Patrick Deane, the new president of McMaster University; Gord Arbeau, associate director, public relations, McMaster University; Mary Koziol president, McMaster Students Union; Laura Stevens, director, Student Community Support Network; Councillor Brian McHattie; and the representatives from Hamilton Police Service, city bylaw, and fire prevention.

In her classic book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the late Jane Jacobs emphasized the importance of "eyes on the street." She was referring to the need for ongoing activity in urban areas and the need for engaged stakeholders in order to develop and preserve safe and vibrant residential communities and merchant districts. As I start my fourth year as president I believe that the association and its community partners are these valuable "eyes on the street." The excellent newsletters for autumn 2009 and spring 2010 reveal the amazing scope and depth of the board's and members' volunteer activities. All are worthy of mention, but time permits reference to only a few:

- The September proactive bylaw enforcement by municipal bylaw enforcement and the HPS
- The Adopt-Your-Block program, now with 41 of 42 neighbourhood blocks having sponsors
- The Adopt-A-Box graffiti cleanup program
- Restoration of the Memory Garden on Emerson Street
- Compelling Jimmy Gringo's Burrito Factory on Marion Avenue to comply with bylaws on its takeout-only licence and parking
- Formal presentations to Hamilton Health Sciences on its Access to the Best Care plan and the Ontario ombudsman's office about the Local Health integration Network's lack of public consultation
- Active participation in the Neighbourhood Residential Housing Community Liaison Committee; its report has been tabled with city council
- Planning and participation in the MSU's annual pajama parade
- The ninth annual community cleanup
- Extensive participation in Earth Day 2010 activities, which included planting of 2,400 trees in Churchill Park, among other events
- Building a boardwalk with the RBG on Caleb's Walk in the Westdale ravine, all in one day
- Supporting a community garden in Alexander Park and rehabilitation of the herb garden at the Aviary

These good works send a clear message to all residents of and visitors to our near-campus community, that all are welcome, that we care, and that we are ever vigilant.

I have two short anecdotes, both involving the community cleanup on April 17, an overcast and chilly Saturday. First, in Ainslie Wood East I met two gentlemen, one in his early to mid 70's. They casually mentioned that every second week they walk through their immediate neighbourhood picking up garbage. Second, my route took me to the intersection of Emerson Street and the Rail Trail. There I met Adela Antonow, a retired Polish lady of short stature but with a big heart. Every week, no matter the weather, she cheerfully patrols a section of the Rail Trail picking up garbage. These three persons do this "grunt work" without expectation of public praise or recognition, but simply because they care. Another example of "eyes on the street."

I end with the same request that I made during my report at the 2009 AGM, but with a greater sense of urgency. Since some of our directors may be stepping down altogether or reducing their duties because of personal commitments, the board needs new energetic members. Since each director has a particular "portfolio," his or her participation is certainly manageable. Please give our request your serious consideration and call me. Thank you for your attention, and enjoy the new format for the AGM.

John Wigle then presented to Hazel Broker a Because We Care Award, recognizing her volunteer efforts in keeping Paisley Avenue South clean and for creating a sense of community on her block where she has lived for 70 years. Hazel responded by speaking of how her philosophy of life gives her the impetus to volunteer her services: "If it bothers you, don't complain . . . do something about it."

John Wigle then invited Dr. Patrick Deane to say a few words. Speaking without notes, Dr. Deane talked about his personal knowledge of problems in near-campus communities from his time at Queen's. He commented on the slide show and focused on the slide depicting Westdale as Canada's first planned community, noting how special it is for McMaster to be located here. He then spoke about the Garden City Movement that influenced the early planning of Westdale.

Membership Report (Loreen Jerome)

Good evening everyone. On this, our 12th AGM, I am pleased to report that on Aug. 31 we had 602 paid-up members, including 14 Friends of the AWWCA—an increase of 35 paid-up members compared to Aug. 31 last year. There are 19 overdue memberships. Assisting me in membership collection are Betty Bechtel, Earl Jerome, Barb Mansfield, and Janet Woodward.

In the past year, we welcomed 66 new members to our association; your membership helps us to continue as a strong association. Between newsletters, we communicate with 89 per cent of our members by e-mail. This is an increase of 3 per cent over last year.

Our block representatives delivered about 2,800 invitations to tonight's meeting, and we thank you for helping us get a good turnout tonight. We especially thank Murray Babb, Earl Jerome, Linda Kisko, Anne Klaus, and Cathy Mansfield for delivering invitations to blocks without representatives or where representatives were unable to deliver them.

There are a number of blocks in Ainslie Wood East where we have no representative. If you are able to help, please speak to me afterward or sign the sheet in the foyer. It is a small commitment of time but a big help to our association and community.

Treasurer's Report (Barb Mansfield)

Good evening. As treasurer I am happy to report that we have a combined bank balance of \$4,478.00 as of Aug. 31. This consists of a balance of \$1,663 in our TD operating account and \$2,815 in our ING savings account. We have approximately \$1,100 more cash on hand than a year ago. The difference is due to the earlier collection of membership renewals and to the one-time cost in 2009 of an LCD projector.

Copies of our Statement of Operations for the year ended Aug. 31, 2010, are available at the front of the stage for those who want one.

I am pleased to report that, yet again, we will be able to continue without any increases in our membership fees. Thank you to those members who renew biennially; this saves a lot of time and effort in collecting and processing renewals.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all past and present members for their interest and support of the association.

I also encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering to contact any board member after this meeting.

Presentation of Last Year's Minutes (Angela Tirone)

Ken Ockenden made the motion to accept the minutes from the 2009 annual general meeting. Phyllis Tresidder seconded the motion. It was carried with none opposed and no abstentions.

Summaries of the Breakout Groups

Police Concerns (Sergeant Sabrina Feser, Inspector Scott Rastin, and members of the ACTION team and mounted unit; Ira Rosen, leader)

Some members of the new ACTION team were introduced (Addressing Crime Trends in Our Neighbourhoods). It is the first year of this program, so it is important for us to give feedback to the Hamilton Police Service to help ensure that the team continues. It has 40 members. The five riders in the mounted unit work with four specially trained horses. This September the mounted unit was part of Welcome Week security, including the pajama parade. The police increased enforcement and visibility in our neighbourhood during Welcome Week.

Safeguard is a program available to all residents. An officer will come to your home and assess any dangers and advise you how to improve security around your home.

Ainslie Wood and Westdale Stabilization Strategy (Al Fletcher, manager of strategic projects; Phyllis Tresidder, leader)

City staff have been directed by Councillor Brian McHattie to report on where we stand as a university community and what other communities are doing differently. The Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan, which sets a vision and direction for the community, is currently under review.

Two of the issues that will be addressed in the secondary plan are comprehensive zoning so as not to lose the "monster home" bylaw and continuing encouragement of purpose-built student housing.

Many topics were discussed:

Unfortunately parents who purchase houses for their children while they attend McMaster do not purchase ones that were converted by investors to student rentals and need to be fixed up; they want homes in good condition, so we end up with more student houses.

It is a wonder that there has been no tragedy in a student home.

Attached-garage conversions need to be investigated.

The licencing of rental properties should be based on habitable rooms or parking spaces.

Taxation as a disincentive is not a possibility under the present system.

It is difficult to inspect student homes because bylaw has limited entry.

Grants and loans would be an incentive to restore student houses to single-family homes.

Condos for students would still be an investment for parents.

Seniors housing would help maintain a balance (Mr. Fletcher noted that city hall cannot dictate to developers what to build).

This group ended on a sad note, with one long-time resident of Ainslie Wood saying that because of the deterioration of his neighbourhood in the last 10 years, even if senior housing becomes available, he will leave the area.

Proactive Bylaw Enforcement and Fire (Glyn Wide, superintendent of municipal law enforcement; Kelly Barnett, MLE community-liaison co-ordinator; Jim Winn, chief fire-prevention officer; Carolyn Kinsley, leader)

Municipal bylaw enforcement has been reorganized since Mr. Wide became superintendent, and enforcement has been stepped up. The city has 50 bylaws, which have been prioritized according to what the community says are the problems, with four teams now specializing in different bylaws.

Project Compliance is the new name for proactive enforcement. It is a pilot program for 18 months. Enforcement is paid for by fees for service, not out of property taxes. Six officers

work three days a week in a proactive program. They do not rely on complaints but look for bylaw infractions.

Fire and public health provide bylaw with tips on illegal use of buildings. Mr. Wide, a retired police officer, has introduced the use of search warrants to gain entry to investigate violations of zoning, such as operating an illegal lodging house. This innovation has changed the enforcement problem that was brought up in Phyllis's breakout group.

Many more charges are being laid now. Tickets for noise are issued without a warning.

Noise due to parties is still a problem; residents must call in complaints so that problem houses and areas can be tracked even if bylaw or police cannot respond immediately. Addresses with three or more complaints are put on a "hot list."

Laura [Stevens?] from the Student Community Support Network stressed the importance of peer-to-peer education to decrease problems.

City Initiatives for Our Community (Councillor Brian McHattie; representatives from parks, cycling, walkability, and waste management; Rob Payne, leader; summary by Mr. McHattie)

We are not communicating well that this is a walkable area; we need to raise the profile of the neighbourhood. The public-health benefits of having many trails in the area have not been measured. We need to build more trails.

Many residents commented that the waste-collection teams are throwing their waste receptacles after emptying them. We need to let Mr. McHattie know when this happens repeatedly.

There is a focus on active transportation--bike lanes in the neighbourhood are largely completed.

The Master Transportation Plan review will begin in the spring. City staff are currently waiting for finalization of plans for light-rail transit.

The Aviary will be moving to Gage Park, so we will need to look at repurposing that area.

A new soccer field will be built in Churchill Park.

John thanked all who participated and adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.