

AINSLIE WOOD/WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.
MINUTES OF THE 17TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 21, 2015

Location: St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church, 2 Bond St. North

Recording secretary: Carolyn Kinsley

Board members present: Terri Bocz, Carolyn Kinsley, Steven Metham, Kenneth Moyle, Jay Parlar, Ira Rosen, Kevin Russell

Regrets: Shelli Eisenberg, John Wigle

5:30-6:30 p.m., registration

6:30 p.m.: President Jay Parlar welcomed attendees and presented the agenda. There were about 40 people in attendance for this portion of the evening.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Metham said that our TD chequing account has \$1,568.28 and our ING savings account has \$2,974.11. Kevin Russell moved and Ken Moyle seconded the motion to accept the report.

Membership Secretary's Report: Kevin Russell said that as of Aug. 31, 2015, we had 212 paid-up members, 49 of them due to renew in September 2015. He sent out e-mail reminders. We have had a decline of 133 members over the year. He asked members to provide us with their new e-mail address if it has changed. Kevin moved and Ken seconded the motion to accept the report.

Nomination Officer's Report: Kevin presented the list of candidates for office: Jay Parlar, past president and recording secretary; Ira Rosen, president; Ken Moyle, vice-president; Carolyn Kinsley, corresponding secretary; Kevin Russell, membership secretary; Terri Bocz, director; Shelli Eisenberg, student liaison. Kevin moved and Ken seconded the motion that the candidates be acclaimed as nominated.

Ward 1 Councillor's Report on His Time in Office Thus Far

Aidan Johnson, our councillor elected in October 2014, was our guest speaker. He began by acknowledging Ira Rosen as a fellow candidate last October and his many contributions to this neighbourhood.

Aidan mentioned **recent significant decisions by the Committee of Adjustment** that the applicants have appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board—102 Ainslie Ave., 29 Bowman St., 111 Winston Ave., 31 Yarmouth Court—as having to do with "landlordism" and unsafe student housing, the parking bylaw, and building-code rules about the number of habitable rooms. The quality of our neighbourhoods and relations between transient and long-term residents must be taken into consideration. The CoA and the city's planning committee finally seem to understand the issues. Part of the problem is that staff planners are divided. Aidan has had to move that the city hire outside planners to prepare for OMB hearings when the CoA's decision differs from staff's recommendations and the landlord appeals. As a lawyer, he understands how to use the law as a weapon. But basically the news is positive.

He has been having **conversations with McMaster about their advertising illegal lodgings on their website**. Could the city provide filtering tools, or should McMaster be advertising at all?

During his campaign he knocked on every door in Ward 1 and saw some very sad hygiene and fire-code violations. **Students need to be educated about tenants' rights**; he's discussing this with McMaster. Often the students who don't protest housing conditions are the first in their family to go to university or are from lower-income families. More affluent students seem more aware of their rights

and more likely to insist that the landlord fix things. Please call or e-mail him to sic bylaw on negligent landlords. He has broached the idea to McMaster that they pay for a proactive bylaw officer, but so far they have not taken up the suggestion. He is also talking to the city about better funding for bylaw and educating bylaw officers about their right of entry so they can do a robust investigation. He understands the issue on a personal basis--when he was in his 20s, his parents sold their house on Whitton because of rowdy students.

Aidan is vice-chair of the city's finance committee. Ward 1 pays the highest taxes in the city. The city budget is \$3-billion.

Light-rail transit: The original blueprint has been scratched. Now it is to begin in front of McMaster Medical Centre, go east along Main Street, and connect to King Street via a dedicated bridge by the Beverly Hills apartments. There will be stops at McMaster Innovation Park, Dundurn, Queen Street; the eastern terminus will be at Queenston traffic circle. There is to be a spur on James Street North to Liuna Station and the new GO station and the waterfront. Premier Wynne has announced there will be electrified track between Toronto and Liuna in three years, with service *promised* every 30 minutes. The short-term pain will be one and a half lanes under construction, which is to begin in 2019, expected to last four years, details not yet worked out. LRT will make it feasible for McMaster students to live downtown. Developers are already circling. It also will make travel quick for researchers, etc., coming from Toronto and will be a real boon for the city's economy. He sees this as an opportunity to push for social housing. Property values will explode along the line, displacing low-income residents. The city will be talking about what to do about social housing without waiting for the province.

Aidan is City Council's representative on the board of the **Royal Botanical Gardens**. MPP Ted McMeekin is seeking provincial status for the eco park. Aidan wrote a motion with other representatives that the Conservation Authority be required to protect biodiversity and to share seeds of native plants among conservation lands. He is also on **the SPCA board**, which is looking for savings and better protection for animals. There is a large feral cat population in the Westdale ravine.

Participatory budgeting: Everyone in Ward 1 age 14 and over can vote on how to spend this money. Aidan didn't have time to organize the process after his election, so we'll have approximately \$3-million from last year and this. He is looking for participants on the committee to receive suggestions. Interviews will be in the coming weeks. He's looked at feedback from participants and non-participants in past years, and what seems needed is a more democratic process. One suggestion is to hold community charrettes for neighbours.

A question and answer period followed:

Q (Julianne): If the city is hiring outside planners OMB to fight our city planners before the OMB, as a cost-saving measure how can we address our planners to make decisions that support our communities.

A: Write to the Committee of Adjustment because the planners do read the correspondence.

Whichever planner is in charge makes the decision—there's a diversity of opinion among city planners. The city is looking at zoning along the whole LRT corridor. What changes do we need to accommodate LRT? This is an opportunity to address our concerns. Jason Farr is in charge and understands our concerns.

Q (Vivian): Planners say density is good. Westdale is no longer a suburb but urban. Balance and aesthetics must be considered.

A: Some of our Ward 1 participatory-budgeting money this year is being invested in noting buildings of architectural importance.

Q (Tibor): Landlord licensing was defeated by antipoverty activists elsewhere in the city.

A: Aidan said he was a legal-aid lawyer before being elected to council. The licensing committee has been marginalized in the city, but there's movement toward thinking licensing would be good for poor tenants. Mathew Green (councillor in Ward 3) is in favour, as his ward is badly affected [by negligent

landlords]. Another member of the committee is Terry Whitehead [councillor for the ward with Mohawk College], who has some sympathy for landlord licensing.

Q not captured. A: The city doesn't have corruption, but planners are pro-density. Condos go to upper-income residents, and that's density. It's bad to have large houses sitting empty when poor people need places to rent.

Q: Why has the commercial-zoning bylaw not yet been implemented? Answer not captured.

Q (Judith): She is concerned about child poverty. The city owns buildings generating no revenue, such as St. Mark's Church.

A: Yes, it's a possibility for the city to sell such properties. There is a motion by the finance committee to explore taxing real estate transactions to provide money for downloaded community services. The city needs more revenue. Hamilton has a large indigenous homelessness problem. The Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty is trying to identify how to address aboriginal poverty in the city. Awareness raising is also needed re LRT vis-à-vis poverty issues.

Group Discussion to Help Determine the Goals and Plans of the AWWCA

After an intermission, about 15 members remained for this discussion.

Ken Moyle explained our database of rental housing.

Vinnie Welsh and Terri Bocz reviewed our work on land use and applications for variances to the CoA. Vinnie says they are increasing. Easy ones take a couple of hours to review. Terri estimates that she spends six to seven hours every two weeks working on this file. Others, such as 111 Winston Ave., can take Vinnie up to 30 hours when the CoA rejects the application and the landlord appeals to the OMB. There are maybe two or three such applications a year. She and Terri must check the city's website every two weeks to find the applications that apply to Ainslie Wood and Westdale.

Jay said that we need to know the membership's wishes on issues. We need to prioritize what we do, and we need more help.

There was some discussion about whether our membership fees could be reduced but agreement that we should keep a fee. Vivian suggested we could have a "job jar" for people who can't pay.

Jay distributed a motion to change our membership criteria to admit renters. The board had been discussing this idea for several years.

Ira Rosen moved the motion, seconded by Ken Moyle, that:

The criterion for membership under Bylaw 1.a.iii ("They own the dwelling in which they reside or are related to the owner of the dwelling in which they reside") be replaced by: "They agree with the mission statement of the AWWCA as stated in our Constitution."

Jay spoke to the motion, explaining why the board had decided to introduce it. We would be more truly a community association. Our neighbourhoods are changing, with more renters. Many renters are not students or transient, such as our treasurer's aunt and our membership secretary's sister-in-law. Mary Louise thought it would create a more positive view of the association, which some see as anti-student and exclusionary.

We would need to change our name from the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association of Resident Homeowners, but this would be expensive and time consuming, so we could wait until we see whether this change works.

Judith Bishop asked the motion be put. It was carried with no nays and no abstentions.