



## **2016 YEAR END REPORT**

The Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations' 15<sup>th</sup> year (since its inception in 2001) was yet another busy and eventful year.

2016 ended with the December 13 celebration of the many contributions of former Chairs, Peter Baker and George Millbrandt, with toasts to their leadership through much of FoNTRA's past. They are missed. Many thanks to Andy Gort for organizing this successful event.

The first ever FoNTRA/City Planning Forum held on April 16 was a major highlight of 2016. We set the agenda for discussions focussing on issues facing FoNTRA members in areas designated Neighbourhoods – such as the operations of the Committee of Adjustment, the newly approved Neighbourhoods amendments to the Official Plan (that included the results of many meetings between FoNTRA reps and City planners), as well as issues with construction of infill housing and zoning for neighbourhood areas. Given the success of the first Forum, we are currently working with City Planning to develop an agenda for a 2017 Forum.

Members, lead by Mary Helen Spence, participated in the development and work of the Toronto Noise Coalition, which included residents associations and individuals concerned about the City's proposals for a revised Noise By-law driven by music industry interests that emerged without input or involvement from residents. The Coalition's well-organized advocacy and mobilization of different organizations resulted in the City setting up a stakeholder committee to advise on a completely new By-law. Cathie Macdonald and Harold Smith are representing FoNTRA on the stakeholder committee.

FoNTRA submitted a comprehensive letter (Matthias Schlaepfer) and a summary (John Bossons) to the Province making recommendations for changes to the mandate, role and operations of the Ontario Municipal Board so that it would provide fairer and more equitable access for residents to participate in hearings. Several FoNTRA member RAs have used this submission as the basis for their own submission. Legislation is expected to be tabled in the New Year, hopefully resulting in significant improvements for residents.

A FoNTRA working group (Jeremy Gawen, Al Kivi and Linda McCarthy) is planning to meet with Sarah Rodgers, recently appointed interim Secretary Treasurer of the four City Committees of Adjustment, to discuss issues residents face. This will be followed up with a proposal for a 2017 Forum discussion on Committee operations.

FoNTRA representatives participated in various City initiatives to ensure the views of residents were heard – design guidelines for local neighbourhoods and townhouse

developments, ravine strategies, the future of the Toronto Botanical Gardens, and Midtown in Focus. FoNTRA discussed a wide range of issues facing member RAs, such as encroachment of townhouse developments in Neighbourhoods (Keewatin, Weybourne Crescent), inadequate transition to Neighbourhoods, inappropriate development proposals such as 90 Eglinton E./Henning Ave., the Arts Shoppe development construction conditions, heritage designation (the Capitol Theatre, Lawrence Park west), and issues outlined by Debra Sartok with uncapped sewage laterals that cause flooding. We also discussed issues that affect us all, such as the impact of increased house prices on neighbourhood stability, and what we can do to help, as well as long term financial planning and the 2017 City of Toronto Budget. We also acted as a clearing house for contact information on matters of interest (but did not get directly involved with), such as the redrawing of ward boundaries, aircraft noise, and movement of dangerous products by rail and pipeline.

FoNTRA as an organization continues to thrive, with 27 paid up member RAs in 2017. We had ten monthly meetings of RA representatives to discuss current issues and develop strategies to address these. We are currently looking for a new permanent meeting location due to noise issues at the current Wallace Gastropub location (ground floor) - suggestions are welcome. We welcomed new Steering Committee members: Arlena Hebert, from Lytton Park Residents Association, who keeps our web site updated; Andy Gort and Al Kivi as alternates from SERRA; and John Bossons from Summerhill Residents Association.

What to watch out for in 2017? One interesting City Planning project is the “Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities Study” which looks at how to make high rise living work for children and families. As our communities change and become more dense, we need to ensure that they continue to be great living environments (unit, building and neighbourhood scales) for all ages.

We wish you Happy Holidays. We look forward to working with you in 2017 in our ongoing quest to make planning work better for residents.

Yours truly,

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**The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)** is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.