

Report for 2017 to be presented at the SAHRA Annual General Meeting on April 5, 2018

2017 was once again a busy year for the South Armour Heights Residents' Association (SAHRA) with many challenges and accomplishments. The following are some highlights.

Last year, [Neighbours' Night Out](#) was moved from the day after Labour Day to earlier in the year, June 13, so as not to compete with the high activity level that families experience upon the end of the summer holiday season and the return to school. The Fire Department arrived with one of their beaming red trucks, much to the delight of the youngsters. Balloons were available for the smaller fry while ice cream was enjoyed by everyone. Once again, student volunteers helped at the booths and kept things organised. While attendance was down slightly from previous years, Neighbours' Night Out will be held again in June this year, a little later, on the 19th. We hope you will join us at 2 Haddington Avenue, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm.

In 2016, SAHRA was surprised to find out that the Avenue Road Avenue Study does not apply [north of Joicey Boulevard](#). In January 2017, SAHRA and OOGRA (Old Orchard Grove Ratepayers' Association) met with three planners from the City to discuss the zoning and planning on this portion of Avenue Road. We continue to be concerned that the current transition zone between Highway 401 and the commercial strip will be developed despite requiring zoning changes.

In April 2017, the City released a long-awaited [status report](#) of the 21 recommendations that came out of the [Avenue Road Avenue Study 2009](#). A positive point of the review is that the City has completed some greening, park and streetscaping tasks. However, SAHRA was underwhelmed with the recommendations of [this report](#). In general, they amount to items that one would expect the City to undertake on any Avenue. Of the 21 recommendations, nine have been implemented, three are now closed and part of the 250 Lawrence West development negotiations, four are rejected, one more might happen and we expect another four will not be implemented. The report added a new recommendation – to establish a Parking Working Group which would have participation from a wide group of stakeholders, although residents' associations were not listed. "The mandate could be to review and report on opportunities to provide additional on-street parking on side streets in the Avenue Road Study Area" and "tasked with reviewing and providing an assessment of any impacts that may result from removal of the existing midday parking prohibition on side streets along Avenue Road from between Brooke Avenue to Ridley Boulevard."

In 2016, SAHRA first raised the issues of parking, traffic congestion and [pedestrian safety near Armour Heights Public School](#). We met with the councillor, a city traffic engineer and the school's principal in June 2017, but unfortunately neither the City nor the school felt the issues to be of enough concern to follow up. With the more recent news of increased

pedestrian deaths since the beginning of 2018, including those of two children near their schools, two residents and SAHRA have again contacted the councillor, and SAHRA has also contacted the school's principal and trustee. The councillor's office has advised that she is working to expedite rollout of photo radar enforcement in school zones and successfully moved a motion to have the "watch your speed" program expanded. Her office has asked a representative from the Vision Zero Team to conduct a review of the zone around the school and make recommendations. We hope there will be meaningful improvements and will be monitoring this issue.

SAHRA has highlighted a number of city-wide issues to the [Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association \(FoNTRA\)](#) and at our request, they have been brought to the attention of the City:

- Elimination of the [Waiver Process](#) used at the Committee of Adjustment (CofA). The City has yet to make a decision.
- The City has a policy of the [deadline](#) to provide notice of what developments are going to be heard at each CofA meeting and of the deadline of posting the decisions. The policy is stricter than the provincial regulation. The City is meeting neither its own policy nor the regulation. There is no resolution yet.
- [Payment-in-Lieu of Parking Policy](#) is in need of an update to make it consistent across the city; the rates charged are also out of date. We have also asked that Payment-in-Lieu of Parking should be made a condition of all CofA approvals when recommended by Transportation Services. No resolution yet.
- We have written letters [supporting FoNTRA's positions](#) on OMB reform, basement sprawl and reducing the length of time that the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre was going to be closed for renovations.

SAHRA has also requested that our councillor arrange for [Payment-in-Lieu of Parking funds](#) raised in the Upper Avenue area to be used for parking solutions within that area. She has refused.

As in the last many years, much of SAHRA's activity has been related to [increased development](#) within our neighbourhood and along the arterial routes close to our area. We have taken action regarding the following locations:

- 250 Lawrence West: New plans submitted in February 2018 call for a 10 storey condo with 159 units. SAHRA issued a letter to support the councillor's request to provide City legal services to oppose the development at the OMB along with our reasons for opposing the development. SAHRA, OOGRA and Lytton Park Residents' Association (LPRO) have registered as Parties and several Participants have registered as well to speak at the OMB Hearing (May 22 – June 1). We have asked our members to donate to the effort to oppose this development. A lawyer and a planner have been engaged, who are essential to have a chance for success. Fundraising is well underway, but more funds are needed to support the costs of these resources.

- 1560 Avenue Road: Over the year, we have reported this site several times to the City, when they were constructing without a building permit. A permit was finally issued following changes to the drawings. While the permit and plans were for a three story structure, the building now includes fourth floor. We have met with the City to follow up and the Building Department is now reviewing revision submissions.
- 1580 Avenue Road (old beer store): This proposal started off at 8 stories with numerous variances. SAHRA issued a letter objecting to these items as did the City's staff report which, among other things, requested that the 45-degree angular plane on Avenue Road be respected. The plans were significantly reworked to 7 stories and much closer to the Avenue Road Avenue Study built form. SAHRA then issued a letter of support, appreciating appropriate development on Avenue Road. When the project came before the North York Community Council (NYCC), the councillor put a pre-prepared motion forward to eliminate the 45-degree angular plane requirement. To SAHRA's consternation, the motion passed.
- 1780 Avenue Road (old post office building): Renovations are currently underway to make this a large day care. We have expressed concerns about parking, and especially about drop off and pick up of children. We foresee considerable impact on traffic in the area and on safety of the parents and children. The application was reviewed at TLAB (Toronto Local Appeal Body) and the decision called for a Management Plan to be developed and then approved by the City's Transportation Services Department.
 - TLAB is a new appeal board. Instead of going to the OMB, minor variance appeals now go to TLAB. The process is somewhat different and SAHRA has been on a steep learning curve to understand the requirements. All the submissions are made online and with strict deadlines. We have had two TLAB hearing experiences to date and another coming in the near future. While the process is supposed to be simpler and less expensive, the jury is still out.
- 1940 – 1942 Avenue Road: SAHRA issued a letter opposing the reduced rear yard set back and requested that payment-in-lieu (PIL) of parking be made a condition of approval at CofA. The CofA agreed with us. However, the councillor made a motion at NYCC which stipulated a payment-in-lieu of parking of three spaces totalling \$5,000. The standard would have been \$5,000 per space totalling \$15,000. (Actual costs are in the \$40 - \$50,000 per space.) SAHRA submitted a letter opposing this at NYCC and deputed, but the motion passed. SAHRA is concerned that the city is not applying a greater emphasis on payment-in-lieu of parking, which would increase funds available to the city.
- 2097 Avenue Road: We asked the City to stop the resident from running a business out of this residential location. The resident has since left.
- 2105 Avenue Road: We have been pushing the City to deal with the owner who runs a business out of this residential location.
- Avenue Road bridge over Highway 401: The province is planning to replace this bridge in 2019. SAHRA sent a letter to the Minister of Transportation supporting Cycle Toronto's concern that the new bridge design does not accommodate the province's guidelines for cycling infrastructure. The province's initial position was that the design was complete

and had been agreed to by the City. After numerous other letters of concern, the councillor is attempting to mediate a solution.

- 228 Wilson Avenue: This proposed development has switched several times between being a condo and an apartment building. The current proposal is for a rental building with 131 units. In all proposals, the number of parking spaces has not met City guidelines. The City has stated that “changes” will be reviewed by the CofA. SAHRA and OOGRA have contacted the City with our comments and are awaiting new plans for review at the CofA.
- 79 Felbrigg: The plans requested a third storey; it was approved by the CofA. The decision was then appealed by SAHRA to TLAB. SAHRA hired a lawyer and a planner to oppose the third storey and it was denied. We see third stories as significantly changing the character of the neighbourhood.
- 8 Haddington: Plans are also for a third storey. We will once again oppose the proposal at TLAB.
- Numerous developments were made in SAHRA’s area which were addressed and where no objection was made.

In May 2017, City Transportation Services issued a report recommending that [speed humps](#) not be installed on Elm Avenue from Joicey to Felbrigg since the minimum guidelines were not met. SAHRA issued a letter supporting this position and suggesting a speed reporting sign would be more appropriate. We attempted to depute at NYCC but the Council ignored our deputation. It passed a pre-scripted motion. Speed humps will be installed and the speed limit reduced to 30 km/h.

A number of properties in the neighbourhood have increased the [impermeable area](#), usually with driveways of increased size. This is contrary with City bylaws. SAHRA has requested the City to follow up with the owners.

Most of the residential intersections in SAHRA’s neighbourhood are [all-way stops](#). However, this is not the case at Joicey & Harley. This can cause confusion, or, worse, safety concerns when drivers assume an all-way stop exists. SAHRA is working with a local resident to highlight this to the City and request a four-way stop or a warning sign indicating that the crossing traffic does not have a stop sign.

Upon demolition of a building, there is no requirement that the sewer pipe extension to the property, or the “[lateral](#),” be capped. This leads to groundwater draining into the sewer system, which results in increased costs of treating the additional sewer water and increased chances of sewer backup in basements during heavy rain events. At the request of several residents’ associations, the City studied the issue and has made a recommendation not to change the regulation. We have asked that they reconsider and believe that they have missed the point about sewer backup.

SAHRA has developed a data base of the 22 [rooftop billboards](#) on the Upper Avenue. If these billboards are removed, a City bylaw states that they cannot be replaced. We are keeping an eye on any changes in the billboards.

In preparation for the upcoming [municipal elections](#), we will be collaborating with other residents' associations for Get to Know the Candidates events. Watch for future eBlasts!

Within the next month, SAHRA will be [updating our website](#) with a new look and improved organisation for the content. Thanks to Bob Williams and Sheila Dunlop for their considerable effort.

Over the last several years, SAHRA's [funds have been significantly depleted](#) by hiring planners and lawyers for hearings at the OMB and TLAB. In each case, we have won. We have decided to improve our financial position over a number of years through our annual membership drive rather than having a special fundraising campaign. However, if a significant issue arises which requires hiring a lawyer and / or planner, it is very possible that this would require a fundraising campaign.

In order to better use our members' financial contributions, we would like to make door-to-door [delivery of hardcopy newsletters a thing of the past](#), and move exclusively to electronic delivery. However, we only have 42% of our membership covered by e-mail addresses. We will be making a push to increase our e-mail coverage since it also allows us to provide more timely information.

Your Board recently asked members to [complete a survey](#), to better inform us of areas of concern, and where we should focus our efforts. The deadline has just passed, but we haven't yet had a chance to synthesize the results. We will include them in an eBlast in the near future.

SAHRA will be [reducing the scope](#) of its initiatives related to development. We will continue to actively assess new developments within our boundaries and on the east side of Avenue Road, south to Melrose Avenue. Also, SAHRA will no longer be opposing residential CofA applications unless there is an issue in principle which we feel needs to be opposed, such as a third storey. However, we will inform neighbours of a new development in their area, providing them with information on how to obtain details on the proposal and how to make their opinions known to the CofA.

As mentioned in several of our eBlasts, SAHRA needs [additional Board Members and / or volunteers](#) to keep handling the many issues we are facing. Some of the areas we need help with are: management of membership information, eBlast preparation, website content updates, Newsletter preparation, follow-up on Neighbourhood issues, special deliveries to homes in our area, street communications, preparing development analytical data and street advocates. Please consider joining your SAHRA Board or volunteering for a specific task of interest to you so that these important activities can continue.

As a final item, I would like to take this opportunity to heartily thank Ron Johnson, our past treasurer and outgoing Board member. Ron joined the Board in September 2008 and was immediately and surreptitiously made treasurer, a role which he held until the end of 2017. Anyone who knows Ron can attest to the fact that he brings a quiet yet forceful personality to his endeavours. I can blame that for being in the position I am today. I think it took Ron four years to reel me in, but he wouldn't let go and I eventually gave up. Ron, thank you for bringing your convictions, energy and humour to SAHRA. We very much look forward to you continuing as a volunteer.

Gary Langdon is our new treasurer and learning fast. Gary, thanks for taking on this important role.

Respectfully submitted....