



The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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FRIENDS OF FORT YORK AND GARRISON COMMON

DATES TO NOTE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Your are invited to The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

Annual General Meeting

Historic Fort York
Thursday, June 19th

Reception	- Blue Barracks (or outside with fine weather)	6:30 p.m.
Annual General Meeting	- Blue Barracks Followed by a guided tour of the New Soldier's Trade Exhibit	7:30 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING ON FORT YORK NEIGHBOURHOOD

Monday, June 16th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Blue Barracks – Historic Fort York
(see article in attached Fife and Drum)

TORONTO WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

Annual General Meeting

Monday, June 23rd 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
National Trade Centre, Exhibition Place
100 Princes' Blvd., Salon 103, Hall A

Items on the agenda will include:

- An introduction to the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation.
- A Year in Review – A summary of what the Corporation has accomplished over the past year.
- Moving Forward – The details on what lies ahead for the revitalization of Toronto's Waterfront (strategic plan) and the unveiling of the Corporation's Annual Report
- Parks and Public Spaces Framework – An informative presentation on how the corporation plans to develop and improve over 500 acres of new and existing waterfront parks and public spaces.

A complete agenda will be available on the Corporation's website at:
www.towaterfront.ca on Monday June 16th, 2003.

The Fort York Neighbourhood

The challenge of creating, on paper at least, a liveable, high density neighbourhood south of Fort York that has already taken nearly ten years, may be almost at an end. On June 16 the Community Planning section, South District, will be holding a public meeting at Fort York to seek input on a revised plan being proposed for blocks, streets, building locations and heights within the triangle bounded by Bathurst, Fleet and Fort York Blvd. (excepting what has been approved already by the OMB), and in the southeast quadrant of the Bathurst-Fort York Blvd. intersection over to Portland St. and down to Lakeshore Blvd.

The triangle of land is part of what was known formerly as the Bathurst-Strachan Neighbourhood. Recently City Council renamed it the Fort York Neighbourhood in a move strongly supported by the Friends of Fort York. Our involvement in the planning of the neighbourhood goes back to 1994 when the Friends organization was founded to advocate dignity, visibility and accessibility for the fort, which was then threatened by a very objectionable Part II Official Plan making its way through the shoals of approval. City Council heeded our warnings, and turned the process back to where some changes could be made, but other aspects could not be undone. For example, the alignment of Fort York Boulevard where it met Bathurst Street had been fixed earlier when the area east of Bathurst was being planned, and there was less scope to relocate it further away from the fort's ramparts, as we wanted. We opposed the high density being sought by the owners of the development lands south of the fort, which was four-times on some lands and three-times on others (a carryover from the existing industrial zoning) because it meant a net density of up to seven-times coverage when roads and other lands that couldn't be built upon were excluded. But we did not succeed. Nonetheless, we looked upon the pattern of blocks, streets and buildings approved in 1995 as the best that could be achieved in the circumstances, and believed that a medium-rise development like St. Lawrence Neighbourhood with a few towers not exceeding 22 storeys along Fleet Street would be tolerable.

We were shocked and disappointed, therefore, when in 2001 City Council turned its back on the St. Lawrence model and approved taller, more slender towers (though no increase in density) on

lands owned by H & R Developments where Fleet St. meets Fort York Boulevard. So strongly did we feel this change to the Official Plan was detrimental to the fort's setting that we fought it before the Ontario Municipal Board. After a hearing that lasted eight days, four of which were taken up by professional evidence put forward by the Friends, the Board sided with the City and the landowner.

OMB hearings are expensive in time and money, however, so when earlier this year other changes to the Official Plan were sought by landowners in the area, the Friends welcomed the City's initiative in convening a planning charette, basically a workshop, under a skilled facilitator. We reckoned there was little to lose, and much that might be gained by discussing in a co-operative setting changes that contributed to a better community, particularly the street-level experience.

In mid-January, 2003, the charette was convened among the affected landowners, their design advisors, the City's planning staff, and half a dozen fort staff and Friends of Fort York. Invited also were representatives of Bathurst Quay and Niagara Neighbourhood. As a condition of the landowners' participation, density was not up for discussion in the charette, since some owners had acquired their lands since 1995 at costs determined by approved densities. Everyone was aware, however, that density would have to be discussed later if the resulting building heights and masses impacted on the fort to an unacceptable degree. Within this context, there was agreement on some very positive changes to the existing plan, particularly in the design of the community.

With the former Molsons Brewery years destined to be demolished by its owner years earlier than expected, plans for a park between Fort York Blvd. opposite the fort's southwest bastion and Lakeshore Blvd. will be realized shortly. This 'link' park will emphasize the fort's importance and enhance its setting. To set off the park as a central feature of the community, the participants in the charette agreed it should be flanked by streets on both sides, and buildings overlooking it must step down in height going north. Within the area east of the park a new pattern of streets will provide better circulation, particularly for people on foot. Along Fleet Street buildings will be placed on podiums of nine to twelve storeys to create a visually pleasing

streetwall and set back from the road and streetcar line to provide wider sidewalks. Along Fort York Blvd. the streetwall will be seven to eight storeys.

And although Blocks 32 and 36, opposite the fort on the east side of Bathurst St., are not part of the Fort York Neighbourhood as the City defines it, the involvement in the charette of 'Let's Build,' the municipal agency charged with arranging the development of these lands for public housing, was a source of much satisfaction. In working up models of what might be erected there, not only did the Let's Build representatives accept the idea of leaving open the area immediately east of Bathurst where the mouth of Garrison Creek was located, but they had their own reasons to *prefer* lower structures on parts of the site that preserved the view of downtown from the fort.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the most difficult challenge was left to the last: accommodating much of the allowed density in towers massed so as not to overwhelm the fort. In principle, this meant staggering the placement and perceived height of the towers, so they did not appear like a picket fence from inside the ramparts. It is a fact that even fairly large buildings can be made to *seem* smaller by moving them back from the point of view. Hence, towers of 15 to 20 storeys in the middle foreground near Fort York Blvd. were of more concern to us than ones of 32 to 36 storeys along Fleet Street, because the former had the potential to make a greater visual impact. The computer-modelling capabilities of the Centre for Landscape Research at the University of Toronto are well suited to analysing such situations, so after the charette was over the Friends introduced some of the other participants to this facility. After data for all proposed buildings in the area had been entered, and the Friends had made known their views on the heights of specific towers, discussions ensued between the developers and the City planners.

Among the things they considered were shifts in the locations of various towers, transfers of density to other lands east of Bathurst that are in common ownership, and how to deal with the density that might be built on the lands under the Gardiner Expressway. Was it to be 'banked' there to await the day the expressway comes down, or could it be moved to adjacent lands? And if the Gardiner comes down after that, how will the resulting, empty corridor be dealt with?

The results of their negotiations will be presented to a Public Meeting on Monday, June 16, in the Blue Barracks, Fort York, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., where there will be an opportunity to discuss the changes, view the plans and ask questions. Following the public meeting a report will be sent to the Toronto East York Community Council, a committee of City Council. The Friends will continue to monitor or be involved in all subsequent phases of approval and implementation, for example, the programs for public art and the naming of streets. We encourage all our members who are able to attend the Public Meeting to do so.

The Fort York Guard

The Fort York Guard including its Fife and Drum Corps, the Fort York Drums, should be able to field as many as 24 members in uniform in 2003. The core of the Guard is made up of secondary school and university students who are hired and partially financed by federal government summer employment grants. Subsidies for twelve student have been granted by HRDC-Summer Career Placements Program and we wish to thank our M.P., Tony Ianno, for his assistance. Three students benefit from subsidies under the Young Canada Works program.

The balance of the Guard is made up of volunteers aged 11 to 15, all but one of whom are in the Fort York Drums. These volunteers receive musical training every second weekend during the year and then join the Drums for up to three days a week during the summer.

Financing the Fort York Guard is one of our major challenges. In 2003 we have been awarded a much appreciated \$15,000 grant by the City of Toronto under the Culture Division's Museum Grants program. The net proceeds from the Georgian Mess Dinner are devoted to the Guard. The balance of the funding comes from donations and starting this year, from funds raised by the provision of Fort York parking at the CNE to be operated by volunteers from the Friends (see Volunteers Needed below).

In 2002, as reported in earlier issues of the Fife and Drum, the Friends lost two of their most active directors, John Barclay and Murray Philp. Donations made in their honour have funded two important acquisitions for the Fort York Guard. The first is a three-pounder, a gun that will appear in the Soldiers' Trade Exhibit during the year but travel with the Guard in the summer season and will be known to all as "Barclay". "Murray", a historic bass drum has been acquired to honour Murray Philp and will be played with the Fort York Drums.

Our Drum Major this year is Andrea Bouma and Ewen Wardle will assume the role of Fife Major. We wish to thank Mike Putnam who has retired as Drum Major, for all his efforts in building the Fort York Drums and to congratulate Mike and Andrea Bouma on their marriage this June. Keiko Twist will assume the role as Director of the Fort York Guard.

We highly recommend that all members of the Friends visit the fort this summer to see our magnificent Fort York Drums in action. We also recommend "To Follow the Drum", the first CD of the Fort York Drums containing a variety of military music from the War of 1812 period. The CD has a price of \$15.00 plus shipping and handling when purchased directly from the Friends of Fort York. To order your copy, e-mail fofy@sympatico.ca

2003 Georgian Mess Dinner

This year's dinner will take place on June 12th, several days from this writing. In this year's historic dinner, the Garrison at Fort York has invited the citizens of York in 1813 to a masquerade at the fort. It should be a very interesting evening.

We wish to thank all those attending for their support of the Fort York Guard. In particular, we wish to thank the sponsors of this year's dinner,

George Weston Limited

Plazacorp Investments Limited

Wittington Properties Limited

for the very generous contribution.

The Fort York Website

The Friends are pleased to announce the release of the new website www.fortyork.ca. We thank Michael Putnam for his initiative and effort in getting us started on the web. While www.fortyork.ca serves as a website for historic Fort York, it is produced and maintained by the Friends of Fort York.

The website is not yet available through the various search engines and for now should be accessed by entering the site address <http://www.fortyork.ca>

The Board of Directors – Comings and Goings

Our Nominating Committee has been very successful in recruiting five new Directors for the Friends. We welcome:

Nancy E. Baines

Robert I. Nurse

Elizabeth J. Quance

Ted W. Smolak

Andrew Stewart

to the Board.

Two of our Directors have stepped down. We wish to thank Anne Beach and Christopher Bovaird for their contribution to the Friends.

Friends of Fort York honoured for Service to the Environment

The Friends were very honoured this year to be awarded the Service to the Environment Award presented by the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects. This award is given to non-landscape architectural individuals, groups, organizations, or agencies to recognize and encourage a special or unusual contribution to the sensitive, sustainable design for human use of the environment. We thank the OALA for granting us this honour.

Volunteers Needed

This summer the Friends of Fort York will operate the parking space at Historic Fort York during the Molson Indy, Caribana and the CNE as a fundraiser for the Fort York Guard. We are seeking volunteers to assist in this project for one or more shifts lasting approximately four hours. Please call Joe Gill at 416-860-6493 if you can help. Thanks.