

Lincoln Heights/Parkway Community Association (LHPCA) inaugural meeting

Date: 2009-06-18

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Regina Street Public School, gymnasium

Chair: Julia Goodman, 140 Lincoln Heights Road

Guest: Alex Cullen, Councillor, Bay Ward

Minute-taker: Chuck Letourneau, 140 LHR

Approximately 50 people in attendance.

1. Welcoming words and purpose of meeting.

Welcoming remarks from Chair, Julia Goodman.

Thanks to Alex Cullen for his assistance. Julia's role is to take initial steps to get a CA going in the area, including organizing this inaugural meeting and the next one, soliciting the necessary volunteer help needed for the initial steps, including volunteer flyer deliverers – thank you! –and getting a draft constitution together for consideration.

Record of the meeting: Chuck has volunteered. Will establish web site to house our content; expert in accessible web site design, so content will be accessible to people with disabilities.

Purpose of the meeting:

- to consult with the potential members on the basic design of the association so that by the fall we will be up and running with an organization that meets the needs of our community;
- to establish the next steps beyond this evening;
- to identify community issues on the minds of potential members;
- to get an update from the community perspective on one issue that has arisen in recent months, the proposed re-development of the Parkway House property.

2. Welcoming words.

Chair asked Alex Cullen, city Bay Ward councillor to speak:

Alex is a past president of the Glabar Park community association. He provided general background on community associations. He mentioned that City Hall supports and encourages formation of community associations: the City wants to ensure that communities are kept informed. An association helps to get city information out to the community. City services of interest to communities include: rinks, parks, police, neighbourhood watch, etc. Alex will be happy to bring police in to speak about

neighbourhood watch or other security concerns. His office will answer questions from individual constituents, but also on a collective basis. Alex holds a meeting for all the community associations in his ward on the first Wednesday of each month (except July and August) where he highlights police reports, and provide updates on what is happening in the ward and city. There are quite a few community associations in the ward.

He suggests it will take more than a planning crisis to keep an association going, especially once the crisis has ended. He suggests forming a strong alliance with the Regina School advisory committee, inviting them to be on the LHPCA board. That will help LHPCA use the school. The rink is a city program run by an individual on the Regina school committee. Perhaps LHPCA can use rink for “winter carnival”. He strongly recommended that the LHPCA should not neglect the social aspects of the community, and suggested summer carnival, winter carnival, other events. He feels these events build bonds to form a stronger community. Good relations with the NCC can help with issues relating to Mud Lake and the bike paths. He also suggested the association should get to know its community police and bylaw people: that could help us deal with noise, park issues, crime, etc. Other issues the LHPCA might want to consider include: rink, green box, light-rail, future of schools, etc.

He believes the legitimacy of any community association stems from its ability to communicate with the residents and give them the ability to participate. LHPCA might want to incorporate as a non-profit in the future: most community associations, however, are not incorporated. While he was with Glabar Park association, successful issues included getting sidewalks, traffic calming, wading pools, applications, and other things. Finally, he reminded us about the services of the Olde Forge for helping seniors stay in their homes longer.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Chair asked for someone to move to adopt the agenda.

Moved to adopt agenda: Suzanne Gauthier

Seconded: Elizabeth Geehan

Motion: Passed (show of hands)

4. Purpose of the Community Association

From the draft constitution:

The mission of the **Lincoln Heights-Parkway Community Association (LHPCA)** shall be to promote, advance and protect the community interests and quality of life for the residents of Lincoln Heights – Parkway and surrounding area by:

- Uniting homeowners, tenants and residents and working towards achieving common goals;
 - Organizing social and recreational activities for and on behalf of the community;
 - Informing members of events, activities, and news that may impact our community;
 - Co-operating with other community organizations in the pursuit of common interests.
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Chair asked for comments and additions, recognizing that there will be another opportunity for input at the next meeting in September.

Comment: we ensure our group think more globally, and not just about local issues.

Response: Alex said there is a federation of city-wide associations we can join.

Question: what does “protect” mean in the mission statement?

Chair: it means that when we look at each issue our primary focus is to represent the interests of our community.

Chair: A draft (based on changes suggested during tonight’s meeting) will be posted on the web site for comment.

Comment: The next meeting announcement flyer should mention the Web site address.

Comment: Not everyone has access to the internet.

Chair: please identify yourself on the green sheet and request information in print form if necessary.

Comment: suggested use of Ottawa Public Library internet terminals for people who don’t have personal access to the Web.

Question: Does the City provide free (or inexpensive) web site hosting for community associations?

Alex Cullen: No, but National Capital Freenet, OCRI are possibilities to consider.

5. Draft constitution: review and discussion of key points.

5.1. Membership:

From the draft constitution:

LHPCA membership is open to any individual over 18 who resides or has legal ownership of residential property within the community boundary; the boundaries are deemed to be:

- **NORTH:** the National Capital Commission bicycle path;
 - **WEST:** the east side of Croydon Avenue;
 - **SOUTH:** Regina Lane;
 - **EAST:** the Ottawa River Parkway; including Parkway House and the Richmond Park Square apartment buildings.
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Question: Boundaries - Why not expand to Britannia?

Chair: the boundaries as proposed give a focus of interest – it would get more complex if we expanded.

Question: Minimum age - Why not lower the age to young teenagers – it's a good idea to encourage teenagers?

Chair: 18 is the voting age (Alex Cullen agreed).

Alex Cullen: most associations set it at 18, but some don't specify an age limit – if rules are clear the “no age limit” works until a controversy occurs.

Comments: A few people spoke in favour of setting a minimum age of 16.

Comment: Extend membership to anyone in High School.

Response: That would reduce the minimum age 13.

Comment: leave it at 18 but invite anyone else to participate (as non-voting participants).

Action Item: if 18, make sure wording read “18 or over”.

Question: Does the membership rule mean that every member of a household can get a vote?

Chair: if each family resident in a household officially takes up membership, then each member would be eligible to vote.

Question: What is the reasoning for excluding the businesses along Richmond Road?

Alex Cullen: community associations are usually strictly residential. Businesses are able to form merchant/business associations. It would be good idea to entertain some relationship with the businesses.

Comment: We might want to include business in the association.

Comment: Businesses have very different needs. It was suggested to include the Richmond Road businesses. Chair noted that might include the owners of Richmond Square (as opposed to just the residents). Alex Cullen: no other community association would do that. Suggests forming a relationship with businesses but not have them as members. Comment: maybe a second class of

membership, e.g. non-voting for businesses. Chair: but we will always allow non members access to meetings.

The Chair called for a show of hands:

Age: 18 or over?

16 or over?

Anybody in high school?

By a show of hands, the majority opted for “18 or over”

Membership extended to: Residents and homeowners?

Residents, homeowners and local businesses?

By a show of hands, the majority opted for “Residents and homeowners”

5.2 Membership fees:

From the draft constitution:

The CA will have some expenses, such as a domain name for the web site etc; it will be necessary to have a budget, which I would anticipate to be small; the proposal is that any person who is eligible to be a member becomes a member when the membership fee is paid for the year; the fee is set at the AGM. Typical fees for Ottawa CAs seem to be in the \$5 to \$10 range.

That paid membership gives the member the right to vote including the election of officers. The list of paid members is also the group that would receive regular communication from the CA.

Chair: the draft constitution suggests a small fee. One becomes a member when the membership fee is collected. The fee is to be collected annually.

Discussion: Alex Cullen: most community associations don't rely on membership fees: they pass the hat, and use events to collect operating cash. Most associations never have more than \$1000 in the bank. Alex's office can be relied upon to print flyers, rent meeting rooms, but NOT monetarily support our local bbq or social event. Alex gets a low city rate for booking the school auditorium.

Question: What other expenses are there if Alex covers printing and room?

Comment: Some think it is good to have a nominal fee: paying a minimal amount will show commitment.

The Chair called for a show of hands:

Membership fees: Remove mention of membership fee?

Keep fee but leave it up for decision at the AGM

Keep a nominal fee in the membership requirements?

By a show of hands, the majority opted for “Keep a nominal fee in the membership requirements”

5.3 Process for nomination of officers and elections.

Chair: Like any CA or other volunteer organization you've belonged to, the CA would have an Executive Committee which would meet regularly to further the business of the CA and would report to and ask for direction from the general membership at meetings called when necessary.

From the draft constitution:

a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and 4 directors who would have special functions assigned to them, chair a committee such as a social committee etc.

Chair: At our September meeting we will have elections for these positions – up to 8. I encourage all potential members to consider putting their name forward to run for office. We do need a volunteer to chair the nominating committee to organize the process; this person will be responsible for soliciting interest from potential members to fill the various positions available, and must not run for office him- or herself. Is there anyone willing to take on the job of nominating committee chair?

Marion Agnew volunteered to be the chair of nominating committee.

Discussion:

Comment: having a president-elect, or some other succession planning spelled out is a good idea; also specify length of terms, etc.

Chair: that will be in the draft constitution.

Comment: suggested wording to read “minimum of four extra officers”.

Alex Cullen: suggests “appointing chairs” that can do special events rather than forcing more directors into constitution. You can always amend at a future AGM if you need more officers.

Chair: please consider putting your name in for the executive committee. It was suggested that if you are interested note it on the green sign-up sheet and indicate your experience.

Comment: We should try and get good geographical representations.

Alex Cullen: you can also appoint “street captains” that are one step below directors, and that ensures good geographical representations.

6. Identification of issues/possible initiatives

The following issues/initiatives were suggested by the audience

- Proposed redevelopment of Parkway House
- Neighbourhood Watch (including park and bike paths)
- Improved access to transit way from this side of neighbourhood
- Performance of winter snowplowing
- Light-rail down the parkway connecting between Tunney's Pasture and Lincoln Fields along river parkway (or Richmond-Byron corridor, or Carling Ave.)
- Outreach to other association and bodies (e.g. businesses)
- Speeding in the neighbourhood
- Social, recreational events, summer, winter
- Winter parking on Regina

7. Proposed redevelopment of Parkway House property

Parham Momtahan updated us on the Parkway House Property issue. His speaking notes are attached to these minutes as "**Appendix 1**".

Discussion:

Comment: It was suggested that the LHPCA constitution make allowance for an emergency AGM in case developers move suddenly.

Comment: suspects 170 units is low estimate, and where will guests park? There is not a lot of land for parking, and there is no parking on Regina.

Question/comment What about the needs of Parkway House residents? We mustn't hurt them by our actions.

Comment: more than just an issue of development: we can't further reduce green space in Ottawa which is so important. Sacrificing green space for high development goes against official plans for smart growth. We are consulting with city planners.

Question: who owns the land?

Alex Cullen: Originally the Catholic school board, who swapped it to city, who then donated to Parkway House in trust.

Comment: Concerns expressed about the loss of view of existing residents in apartments.

Comment: The units planned for people with environmental sensitivities is a good thing. He fears that the current developer (who in his opinion is not bad) might be pushed aside if Parkway House sells to someone else who has even less regard for the community.

Response from Alex Cullen: from 1991 to 2006 (less two years) he was on the City planning committee. The city has values for smart growth and green space in the official plan, but the plan does mention increased density for areas near the

transit way. Alex does feel this particular development is out of scale for the community. But yes, the land could possibly be sold to another developer, who might be more aggressive. Good values are the green space and proximity to Mud Lake, but they will be balanced by plans for intensification along transit way. There will be a tough choice for City council: Alex figures that either way, somebody is going to go to the OMB, and they are historically not sensitive to community associations' arguments. Alex and the city have not received the formal application for zone changing: when that happens we will be able to see the application; the community association will get a copy. He suggests holding a public meeting at that time. The Planning Committee's plan will be made available: all will be able to appear and state our case at a Planning Committee meeting. All commentators have the right to plunk down 150\$ and to go before the OMB.

Question: does PWH have full ability to do what it wants with the land?

Parham Momtahan: legally it belongs to two directors of PWH. We should look into it. The land was in trust to PWH.

Alex Cullen: a covenant on the land to be used for PWH, but that means only that PWH must be on the land - whatever else they do with the rest of the land is theoretically ok. Lawyers may be necessary if you go down this route: he thinks that the developer's lawyers have already thought about this.

Question/comment: Why is our community so dense in the first place? Other communities don't have the same high density.

Alex Cullen: there is a difference between whether an area can support more density, and whether it wants to support more density. This area could support more density, but what increase is appropriate, or "in scale?"

Comment/question: doesn't think that there is a strong market for condo's in the city in any case, at the moment, so why is such density being considered by the developer?.

Comment: The increased density will be dangerous for the wheelchair users from PWH, which would kind of defeat the purpose of improving their facilities.

Parham Momtahan feels, based on the dialogue with the PWH board, that the plan won't substantially change. He thinks the issues will not be decided by passion, but by the legal aspects and the political visions of the drastic zoning change. We must understand the precedents before it gets to OMB.

Alex Cullen: The Community interest group, with Alex, should sit down with city planners to explore the situation in the light of the planning priorities and directions of the City. Parham Momtahan and Dan Brunton are coordinating the development concern group.

Question: Has the PWH board looked at all options?

Chair's feeling - from her meeting with the PWH board - is no, they have not, but suggest that this is not an appropriate topic of discussion for this group.

8. Close of meeting

Chair thanked Parham and Alex Cullen.

The first Annual General Meeting is to be held in September 2009, date, time and location to be determined.

The meeting ended shortly after 9:00 PM.

Appendix 1

Topics:

- Overview of proposal and list of concerns
- What's happened so far
- What's next

Overview of proposal

1. On April 15 Windmill Development presented a development proposal for a 12 story and 20 story building together with relocation of Parkway House. The developer said this would be about 170 units (which is more than the number of existing units of Lincoln Heights residences by the way.) This development is being considered by the Parkway House organization, which would sell the land to the developer, because they see an annual financial shortfall which they would like to address.

list of concerns

While I think everyone in the neighbourhood has high regard for the Parkway House residents who have been our neighbours and part of our community for a long time, there are serious concerns about the proposal that the Parkway House organization and board is supporting with the developer.

The proposed development would require a drastic zoning change from Zone O1, which is Open Space/Parkland to presumably R5 or the highest density residential zoning.

At the meeting and subsequently numerous people in the Lincoln Heights Neighbourhood (and beyond) have expressed serious concerns about the proposed development.

The concerns expressed include:

1. Drastic disregard for the established zoning rationale in the official plan which is to create a buffer or transition zone from high density (Richmond Park Square buildings and Halcyon condominiums) to park land and residential density of the Lincoln Height housing to the West. If this can be done to this Z01 land, what keeps it being applied to all Z01 land? What is the planning criteria being considered here?
2. Vehicle traffic impacts such a drastic density increase

3. Single access issues given the level of density and potential safety issues in this regard
4. Noise and light pollution impact on the neighbouring buildings
5. 'right-to-light' impacts on the neighbouring buildings and not just the neighbouring houses, but the high-rises.
6. Impact on views, particularly from Halcyon and Richmond Park Square, which has material impact on their property values and rental incomes
7. Impact on the natural environment, particularly the trees on the land, and the parkland around it, both due to construction and the drastic increase in density

What's happened so far

1. A group of neighbours have made sure everyone is made aware of the proposal. Peter Caskey, Dan Brunton, Dr. Karen McIntosh, Ron Purver, Julia Goodman, David and Marion Agnew, Joanne Hamilton from Halcyon, Liz from Richmond Park Square.
2. Many have expressed their views about it to our representatives, Councillor Cullen in particular
3. Councillor Cullen's has expressed that (and I quote exactly) "While some development may be warranted on this site, I believe the proposed scale and density is out of proportion for the community."
4. There was a News West article about the development (Dan Brunton)
5. A group of four neighbours (Julia Goodman, Shirley Callard, Peter Caskey, and Marion Agnew) had a meeting with the Parkway House board to establish dialogue and express the neighbourhoods concerns. While the meeting was cordial, the Parkway House organization reiterated that they are relying solely working with Windmill Developments as proposal as their current position on the issue. The Parkway House board mentioned that Windmill may propose some changes relative to the original proposal, they cautioned that they would not be major changes. --
6. There was a good deal of interest in forming a community association for addressing community issues and opportunities, including this one.

7. A few of have been looking into how best to obtain professional urban planning and legal expertise to inform the community's response to this issue (won't be free.)

Next steps

1. Investigating the urban planning basis for addressing the proposal
2. Forming the action plan for addressing a re-zoning application based on the expected Fall timeline. This would include community, political, and legal dimensions
3. Update and review with the community association