

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

NEW CITY OF TORONTO ZONING BYLAW

1st MEETING:

WHEN: Monday, June 1, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge Street (at Heath Street), in basement

2nd MEETING:

WHEN: Monday, June 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: North Toronto Memorial Community Centre, 200 Eglinton Avenue West, in the Multi-Purpose Room (on main floor)

Dear Resident,

May 7, 2009

I invite you and your neighbours to two ward-wide public meetings to discuss an important issue: a Draft New Zoning Bylaw for the City of Toronto.

The City's Planning Division is currently reviewing all of the Zoning Bylaws that have been leftover from amalgamation. There are 43 of these to consolidate into one new bylaw for the whole city. The first draft is the subject of these public meetings. Overdue indeed, this review of the specific development controls, or the Zoning Bylaws, was supposed to occur directly after the City's new Official Plan was approved by City Council in late 2002 (after appeals the new Official Plan came into force in July 2006); when the Chief City Planner at the time recommended the new Official Plan to City Council, he assured us that the new Official Plan did not need the prescriptive details of the old Official Plan such as heights and lot coverage ratios (density) because those details would be retained in the City's Zoning Bylaw. The Chief Planner recommended that the two documents must work in concert with each other and be considered equally to guide development in St. Paul's and the rest of the city.

In many cases, development proposals and the planning process have not worked out for residents of Midtown and North Toronto: something seems broken. In order for the City's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw to be used together as envisioned, the Zoning Bylaws need to be updated to reflect the changes since the bylaws were written, and to reflect the new Official Plan; some Zoning Bylaws are 20 or 30 years old. Unfortunately, the Zoning Bylaw Update Project did not start in earnest until 2008. In my opinion, this was tacitly allowed to encourage just about any development, and to place key precedent-setting big buildings across the city as context to justify more height and density. Spring 2009 is the first time City staff have produced any reports, proposals, or revisions for public scrutiny. Accordingly, you and your neighbours need to have the opportunity to ask questions and give your input toward protecting the quality of life in your respective neighbourhoods. You should have a part in shaping a new zoning bylaw that fixes the flaws of the old and is something to set reasonable expectations to responsibly guide the future.

Everyone should be concerned about potential changes to the Zoning Bylaw because the bylaw affects everyone. It shapes our everyday environment. The Zoning Bylaw regulates how large houses or condominiums can be: if the zoning of a property is increased, the size of the building allowed to be legally built on that property is increased. For example, one of the proposed changes could lead to more 3-storey flat-roofed houses – a house-form that is alien to many of our neighbourhoods and may not be welcome. Another proposed change completely bans below grade garages – I favour this proposal. Yet, another proposed change could make it more difficult for schools and places of worship to locate in neighbourhoods – these were once anchors of our communities. Do these changes make sense? If they do or if they don't, we need to say so now!

After a short open house, the City's Planning staff will be giving a St. Paul's-specific presentation and will be answering your questions. For a copy of the City report on this issue, please visit www.MichaelWalker.ca, www.toronto.ca/zoning, or contact my office to have one sent to you.

I look forward to meeting you and your neighbours on **June 1st at Christ Church Deer Park or June 8th at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre** to discuss this Draft New Zoning Bylaw for the City of Toronto in greater detail.

