



South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association

The SERRA OWL

Summer 2007

New SERRA website now online

By Charles Iscove

The new SERRA website is here! It's been my pleasure, as a member of SERRA and a Professional Web Developer to be given the opportunity to redesign and revive the dormant SERRA website. Thanks to the SERRA Board I have been appointed the site's official Webmaster. I'm looking forward to making the site more exciting and interactive. For now, the look and feel has been changed and the content updated. In the near future, I plan to add relevant photos, up-to-date community content, revive the built-in message boards, create a members area of the website, an online feedback section, and online membership registration. Hopefully the SERRA website will be more accessible and responsive to the neighbourhood. If you have any suggestions, would like to write content for the website, or submit photos, please email me at webmaster@southeqlinton.com

President's Message

By Brian Abbey, MAATO. BSSO. AMSST. CSC. BCQ. President & Statutory Approval Liaison

Let me tell you when Jim Walker threw me in the deep end (so to speak) following the last AGM in the fall, I did not have a clue what I was letting myself in for and I have to take my hat off to him for doing such a great job during his term as President and for his continued support as Immediate Past President. It has been a very important learning curve for me. If it weren't for Jim and the rest of the fine Board of Directors that support me, I believe my job could be a really difficult one and like the spring flowers bursting through, I too, am beginning to see the light! I now feel more assertive in my new role as

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A Welcome Message From Your President

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I welcome you all to SERRA's brand new website. Our new Webmaster, Charles Iscove has done a marvelous job in giving us such a professional site and on behalf of the Board of Directors and the community, I want to thank him for all his efforts.

The new website, though based on the original site, will have much more up to date information, more links to other groups and there will also be interactive areas on the site for your participation in the coming months. You will appreciate that this is a work in progress so it is very important that we get your feedback with ideas or suggestions that you might have to further improve the site and the profile of the Association.



SERRA Boundary Toronto, Canada
 SERRA is bounded on the North by and including the south side of Eglinton Ave East; on the South by and including the south side of Merton St; on the East by and including the west side of Bayview Ave; and on the West by and including the east side of Yonge St.

President as well as my other role as Statutory Approvals Liaison. I am now ready to take on a new level of governance that will give SERRA the ability to be the one strong voice of the community that you have come to expect in fulfilling our mission and values of promoting the well-being and safety of the residents of South Eglinton by identifying and making presentations on local issues to the Toronto civic governments, appropriate regulatory and other bodies and by assisting residents in dealing with local issues.

Please see *President's Message* on page 2

President's Message from page 1

To perform these duties more successfully we need to raise the profile of SERRA and this will require the help of a few more keen and dedicated volunteers who are prepared to spend a few hours a month to sit on the Board and bring to the table some great ideas for progression. If you are a concerned resident and interested in helping out, you are encouraged to attend one of our regular meetings. They are usually held on the third Wednesday of each month, in the Friendship Room, Manor Road United Church, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Please check the 'Meetings' page on the website regularly for the date of the next meeting.

In addition to volunteering, funding is an essential part of raising the bar. Obviously our main objective with fundraising has been to increase the membership and we cannot stress enough how important your membership fees are in the everyday running of the Association. We urge you all to consider joining if you haven't already. Raising the profile of the Association does mean raising the expenditure above the norm. As a Board we have already started discussing different initiatives to try and achieve this. Advertising in the Owl Newsletter and on the SERRA website has been considered. Offering different levels of corporate membership and/or sponsorship to local businesses within our jurisdiction was another suggestion. We would be pleased to hear your comments and suggestions on this matter.

Another important part of raising the profile of any Association is the need for a highly professional and interactive website. As part of the ongoing improvements we have been very fortunate in recruiting Charles Iscove. He is

"We cannot stress enough how important your membership fees are in the everyday running of the Association."

volunteering his professional services as our new Webmaster. The new site will be far more informative and resourceful than the current site but will still have the same address www.southeqlinton.com. Again, any comments or suggestions about the new site will be welcomed in an effort to make future improvements.

We have been carefully monitoring the Committee of Adjustment for any irregularities on an ongoing basis and fortunately the majority of applications have been reasonably straight forward and well within the intent and purpose of the Planning Act. However, you are no doubt aware that SERRA has been monitoring the proposed development at 18 Brownlow Avenue. On behalf of the neighbourhood, Margaret Walker and I attended the OMB hearings held in January. I am pleased to report that after listening to evidence given for the Developer and the City of Toronto, the OMB allowed me to elaborate on my original participant statement and I agreed to be cross-examined. Throughout the hearing I had listened to and taken notes and quite simply the developer was trying to justify a proposal that was far larger than appropriate while the City would not accept anything other than the existing proposal. Using exactly the same reference material and evidence exhibits used by counsel, I was able to demonstrate – using common sense and good planning – an acceptable solution to the problem, that would not compromise the design. The evidence that I gave was more than enough to influence the Board in making a decision that was appropriate for the site. If you would like to read the whole decision you will find it posted on the 'Planning & Development' page of the website.

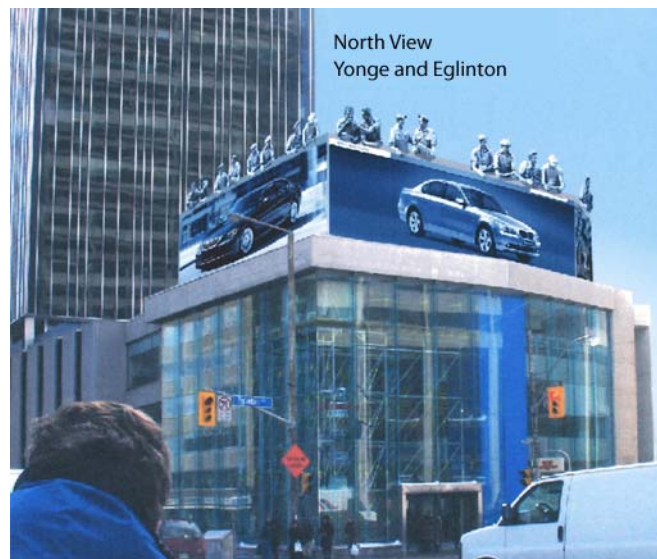
If any of you have any immediate matters of concern or require any assistance or information, please do not hesitate to contact me at brian.abbey@southeqlinton.com

Proposal for the Yonge & Eglinton Centre Community Improvement Project Area Why don't you be the judge and share your thoughts with us?

Abcon Outdoor Inc, a division of Abcon Media with Northam Realty Advisors Limited, the Landlord of Canada Square, 2210 Yonge Street, submitted a proposal to Councillor Michael Walker on May 22, 2007 that is intended to significantly raise the importance and awareness of the Yonge and Eglinton Area.

The proposal entails the construction of a roof top three-sided third-party advertising billboard on the south west corner of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue on the roof of the current BMO building.

The sophisticated structure will incorporate a series of life-sized figures produced by the well-known New York artist and sculptor, Sergio Furnari (www.sergiofurnari.com). It will be based on a very famous image from 1932, "Lunch atop a Skyscraper", by photographer Charles C. Ebbets, revealing 11



steel workers having their lunch on a steel beam on the 69th floor of the General Electric building at the Rockefeller Centre. The unusual and artistic treatment of the billboard is expected to be a very strong attraction, drawing visitors to the area.

Please see *Proposal* on page 4

Farewell to Jim Putt – former vice-president of SERRA

By Margaret Walker (acknowledgements Harold Pidduck & Diane Sirois)

On January 20, 2007, we gathered at the Newbigging Funeral Chapel to say farewell to Jim Putt, who died from complications of Parkinson's disease. Jim resided for many years at 241 Hillside Avenue East and was regarded locally as a man of great integrity and ability. Deeply committed to the welfare of the local community, Jim became a member of SERRA and served as Vice-President. Jim brought to SERRA a well-developed sense of presentation from his many years of marketing in the corporate world – also a considerable talent for strategic planning resulting from 14 years with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. He was an avid sportsman, loved the arts and literature and enjoyed bridge. Because of Jim's concern for the future of South Eglinton, he strongly encouraged the Board to join with other local ratepayer groups in forming an umbrella group – the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association (FoNTRA) – to fight the Minto proposal for a massive hi-rise development at Yonge and Eglinton at

the OMB. He then persuaded the SERRA Board to donate the major portion of an existing legal fund to financially support FoNTRA in the ensuing legal battle. When the OMB Hearing was held in mid-summer 2002, Jim attended many sessions as an observer to demonstrate that the residents of South Eglinton cared deeply about their community. Jim wanted to make the world a better place for the less fortunate, so he volunteered at several community centres, including the Central Eglinton Community Centre. Jim was a volunteer for 25 years with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. For his outstanding achievements and commitment to making a significant contribution towards a positive race-relations climate in Toronto, Jim received the William P. Hubbard Award from Mayor Barbara Hall in 1997. Jim Putt served his community with dedication and grace. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends and his long-time partner and friend, Diane.

Now more than ever, Toronto does not need the OMB

By Michael Walker, Councillor, Ward 22

There is no government arm more reviled by St. Paul’s residents than the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), the unelected provincial appeal body for municipal decisions on development. The autonomy of this City’s planning decisions relies upon the removal of the unaccountable influence of the OMB. Any decision of City Council can be appealed to this provincially appointed, quasi-judicial body. The OMB turns city planning into a bargaining exercise between the developer and city planners. Provincial planning documents are used to justify almost any size of development, almost anywhere. Speculation on properties is on the rise because there is a pattern of developing to double or triple what the Zoning Bylaw allows. It adds up to a loss of control over the growth and the health of our neighbourhoods. I believe that accountability for planning decisions must rest only with elected officials and that requires the abolition of the OMB with respect to Toronto.

With respect to Committee of Adjustment “minor” variance development applications, City Council is currently investigating using the power given in the new City of Toronto Act to establish a local appeal body for minor variances only. In my opinion, the Provincial government has downloaded another costly function onto the City of Toronto. The costs to implement this are prohibitive and there is a problem of conflict

since, as proposed, this new citizen appeal body would be able to overturn another citizen appeal body (Committee of Adjustment). Notwithstanding the costs, if we are to have this new appeal body, it should be composed only of local Councillors who will face the scrutiny of citizens at all times. We need every chance to build more accountability into city-building.

We have an opportunity this fall to tell the Provincial government the OMB must be abolished for Toronto at least – and that we won’t settle for tinkering any longer.

Proposal from page 3

The Billboards will be approximately 14’ high by 48’ wide and each face will be slightly curved. Each of the figures will stand 6’ above the billboards and only their torsos will be visible. In keeping with energy efficiency and Toronto’s Green Policy, the entire structure will be powered by solar energy.

Abcon Media and Northam Realty have been invited to our next board meeting on Wednesday, June 20th 2007 7:00 to 8:30pm at Manor Road Church, Friendship Room. Although there will be a public meeting in due course, you are more than welcome to attend and ask questions. The proposal is posted on the ‘Planning and Development’ page of the website. Please email your thoughts to action@southeqlinton.com

Yes! I want to become a member of SERRA. Annual membership fees are \$25 for homeowners and \$10 for seniors and tenants. Please mail your cheque to: SERRA, P.O. Box 248, Station K, Toronto, ON M4P 2G5

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____
E-Mail: _____

Cheque amount: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$ Other _____

Renew New Member Regular Senior Tenant Donation