

# The Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association

## Fall Newsletter 2022

### What's Happening in the Park



*A Watch Your Speed (WYS) Monitor on St. Leonards Ave Looking East towards Bayview Ave*

#### **Hello Neighbours,**

We hope that you have had an enjoyable summer and will enjoy this fall edition of the LPRA newsletter. Your association has been busy on several fronts including assisting affected property owners at Committee of Adjustment hearings for residential development applications, working to improve the quality of our neighbourhood parks and monitoring the number of car thefts in the neighbourhood plus the growing occurrence of carjacking.

If you are not currently a member of the LPRA please consider joining this fall. Why you should join and how to join are provided in the last section of the newsletter. Also please pencil-in and plan to attend the LPRA Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 pm via Zoom. Call in details will follow later. We are planning to have our newly elected city councillor address the AGM and answer questions that you may have regarding community issues.

## **Neighbourhood Safety**

As a physical return to school has become a reality (again), safe passage between home and school for our neighbourhood children is critical. Vehicles travelling on our neighbourhood streets need to adhere to posted speed limits, particularly in school zones, and drive with care to prevent the risk of a serious accident that could involve not only our children but all residents that are walking or cycling in the neighbourhood. Given that several streets in Lawrence Park do not have sidewalks it is paramount that people and drivers share the road respectfully and with the utmost care.

Also, the volume of traffic passing through the neighbourhood has been increasing in recent years and excessive speeding is a significant problem. Most streets in Lawrence Park have now posted speed limits of 30 km/hr. Watch Your Speed (WYS) monitors have recently been installed on a few streets in the neighbourhood. These monitors will flash the speed of an oncoming vehicle (see photo on page 1). A vehicle travelling at greater than the posted street speed limit will set off a strobing white light on the monitor. Hopefully, these monitors will make drivers more aware of the speed they are travelling at and deter at least some from excessive speeding. It would also be beneficial if our city police could spend time in our neighbourhood ticketing offenders for either excessive speeding, illegal turns onto neighbourhood streets during restricted hours or for dangerous driving.

## **Car Thefts and Carjacking on the Rise in our Neighbourhoods**

Car thefts have been and continue to be an issue in our neighbourhood. Now carjacking has become an increasing problem in the area. **Please Be Aware.** Our friends from Neighbourhood Watch recently circulated tips that were provided by the Toronto police to help deal with and avert potential car jacking situations. These tips are:

### **What to do in the event of a carjacking**

Everyone has a role to play in preventing crime. What is your role if you're a victim involved in a carjacking?

- If being carjacked, give up your car. Don't argue. Your life is worth far more than a car.
- If there is a child in the vehicle, let the carjacker know "my child is in the car". This may be a deterrent to taking the vehicle.
- Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- Try to remember what the carjacker looked like: sex, race, age, hair and eye color, tattoos, special features, clothes / logos and anything unusual or specific, like an accent.
- Report the crime immediately to the police.

### **Be aware of places where carjackings can occur**

Carjacking is a crime of opportunity. Here are some examples of where carjackings take place

- Intersections controlled by traffic lights or stop signs
- Parking garages, shopping malls and grocery stores
- Self-service gas stations and car washes
- ATMs (automated teller machines)
- Residential driveways and streets as people get in and out of their cars
- Highway exit and entry ramps, or other places where drivers slow down or stop

Apply your **B.R.A.K.E.S** and help put a stop to carjacking.

**B**-Be alert

**R**-Respond accordingly

**A**-Act and call 9-1-1

**K**-Know your surroundings

**E**-Escape

**S**-Secure your vehicle

## **Enjoying our Neighbourhood Parks**

Many residents in Lawrence Park enjoy the use of our neighbourhood parks which includes Cheltenham Park, Alexander Muir Memorial Gardens, and Sherwood Park. These parks particularly during the fall are in wide use as the colour of the tree canopy changes to a blazing display of orange, red and yellow colours. The LPRA is of the view that our Parks need maintenance as debris from past fallen branches and dead trees should be cleared. The LPRA is trying to work with the city to see if this debris can be cleared to make our parks even more beautiful and safer for use.

The LPRA is also considering holding a "Pumpkin Parade" in Alexander Muir Gardens on the evening of November 1<sup>st</sup> following Halloween. The idea is to allow residents to show off their beautiful pumpkin creations as well to dispose of their pumpkins after Halloween. If you like this idea and think it would be a fun event for your family, please let one of the LPRA board members know your views. This could prove to be a new family fun annual event organized by the LPRA.

## **Current Residential Development Concerns**

The plans for new buildings in our neighbourhood are continuing to exceed by-laws by a wide margin. Unfortunately, City Planning and the Committee of Adjustment (CoA) are supporting exceptions, i.e. variances routinely often disregarding objections from neighbours or the LPRA. At the last CoA hearing, the LPRA Development Committee member Sara Esnaashari presented the LPRA concerns very well and

managed to get 2 split decisions of the 4-member committee only to be overruled by the Chairman. It is disconcerting that CoA members, who occasionally decide against the planners and builders are quickly criticized and demands for their replacements are coming forward from the building faction.

LPRA got involved in the evaluation of 21 building plans in 2019, 17 in 2020, and 35 in 2021. In 2022, we have had 22 issues with building plans so far and are on course for another 30+ year, if building activity does not slow down in a slowing real estate market.

## **Why and How to Join the LPRA**

The mandate of the LPRA is to promote a strong sense of community and provide a voice that represents the interests of all residents in the neighbourhood.

The LPRA has accomplished much for the neighbourhood over the past several years including:

- Support for residents at Committee of Adjustment hearings on new residential developments
- Lawrence Park Road and Safety Initiatives
- Newsletters and updates to residents on neighbourhood news
- Volunteer work and support for the Cheltenham rink initiative
- The Neighbourhood Watch initiative in cooperation with local police
- Organizing all-candidate meetings for provincial and federal elections
- Liaising with City officials regarding community issues

This work is possible only because of our volunteers and through your support. LPRA depends on motivated volunteers and neighbours' generosity via donations and membership fees. The LPRA has no other source of funding.

Please become a supporting member, or renew your annual supporting membership, online using our secure PayPal server on our website by going to:

<https://lpra.ca/membership/>

The cost is \$50 for one year or \$140 for three years.

If you prefer, download, and print the membership form and send it in with your cheque by mail.

**Thank you and we appreciate all your support!**

**From the Board of Directors, Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association**