

# The Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association

## Winter Newsletter 2023

### What's Happening in the Park

*Cheltenham Park Skating Rink*



*Photo Courtesy of Keith Wilhem*

#### **Hello Neighbours,**

Happy New Year and best wishes for health and happiness in 2023. We hope that everyone enjoyed the holiday season and hope that you will enjoy reading the 2023 winter edition of the LPRA newsletter.

Your association continues to be busy assisting affected property owners in the neighbourhood at Committee of Adjustment hearings on new residential development applications as well as monitoring and working to improve safety and reducing crime in the neighbourhood. House break-ins and car thefts continue to be an ongoing problem. Also, the LPRA this winter has provided funds to assist in the maintenance of the ice skating rink in Cheltenham Park. Unfortunately, mother nature has not been cooperating lately and the rink opening has been delayed. As a reminder, if you are not currently a member or a past member of the LPRA please consider joining now. Why you should join and details as to how to join are included in the last section of this newsletter.

## **Crime in the Neighbourhood**

Car thefts and break-ins continue to be a regular occurrence in our neighbourhood. Didi Cameron and her “Neighbourhood Watch” team do an excellent job monitoring these incidents and keeping residents apprised of criminal activity in our area. Didi’s team is in communication with Division 53 of the Toronto Police Services (TPS) so that they are aware of the issues, and they can be better informed to help reduce the level of crime and theft in the neighbourhood. At our recent AGM held on November 30<sup>th</sup>, Constable Timothy Somers from the TPS joined us as a guest speaker and spoke on policing issues affecting our residents. He provided some great insights and valuable tips on dealing with neighbourhood crime and addressed questions from AGM attendees.

See below a recent report from “Neighbourhood Watch” of break-ins in our area along with some tips to deter thieves from targeting your residence.

1. Around Dec 22-23 there was a break-in on Stratheden Ave. thru a backyard backdoor. Jewellery was taken and the thieves were in and out in 6 mins. Police responded quickly via Avante.
2. On Friday, Dec 30 a break-in on Blyth Hill occurred via entry from a backyard. Jewellery was stolen and the thieves took off thru the backyard.
3. On January 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:30pm another break-in occurred on Blyth Hill via the backyard. A suspect was encountered by the homeowner and the suspect fled. The suspect used a crowbar and could not break special breakproof glass. Police arrived very quickly but were unable to apprehend the suspect.

### ***Tips to deter potential thieves:***

Try to make your house appear lived-in while you are away.

Keep house alarms on while at home.

Lock up your valuables or move them to a safe area.

Backyard crime prevention measures should be considered such as lighting/motion detectors, etc.

## **Recent Concerns Regarding Residential Development Activity**

The number of residential development applications in our neighbourhood requiring a Committee of Adjustment (CoA) hearing for by-law exemptions remains high in spite of a sharp slowdown in the real estate market. In 2022, Lutz Fullgraf, the head of LPRA’s development committee, noted that 30 applications in the neighbourhood were presented at a CoA hearing or the local appeal body. It was noted that with the help of LPRA’s intervention, along with reasoned objections provided by affected neighbours, four out of the last 5 applications heard at the CoA were deferred or denied. This is an encouraging sign that hopefully will continue. In the past the CoA has appeared to routinely support developers/owners requests for exemptions such as variances and often disregarded objections and concerns from affected neighbours.

The more that neighbors get involved with the process and submit reasoned objections to development applications the higher the probability for rejection by the CoA. When a development application is scheduled for a CoA hearing, the LPRA notifies affected nearby residents and will help intervening if needed at the CoA. The LPRA is not opposed to responsible residential development in the neighbourhood. The LPRA is opposed to irresponsible development that is not in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood or maintaining the well being of neighbours affected by the

development. To date, in 2023, there have been eight new 8 new development applications in our neighbourhood that are scheduled for a CoA hearing either in January or February.

### **Do you think a 7% Increase in Property Owner Payments to the City is Justified... We Don't**

This year, the city is planning to raise property taxes by 5.5% plus increase the fee paid by property owners for the City Building Fund by 1.5% for a total increase of 7%. In LPRAs opinion, the increase is excessive. For most working people, incomes are not rising by this amount. And for neighbourhood residents living on a fixed income this puts even more pressure on their ability to pay for daily living expenses. Why is an increase of this magnitude justified? The city argues they have held back on raising property taxes and fees in the past couple of years due to COVID-19. In addition, because inflation is running hot and city operating costs have ben climbing, the city believes the increase is warranted. If you believe the rate of increase in payments is unfair, please write to our city councillor, Jaye Robinson [councillor\\_robinson@Toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_robinson@Toronto.ca) or Mayor John Tory [mayor\\_tory@toronto.ca](mailto:mayor_tory@toronto.ca) to express your views.

### **We Want to Hear from You**

The LPRAs has been representing the interests of LPRAs residents for decades. We would like to hear from you regarding the LPRAs initiatives and mandate. What can the LPRAs do better? What new initiatives should the LPRAs take on? What events (such as a walking tour of the neighbourhood) should the LPRAs organize or sponsor? What initiatives should the LPRAs not support? What is your general view of the LPRAs and its mandate. We will compile all submissions, discuss at an upcoming LPRAs board meeting, and make changes where best determined. Please forward your comments by e-mail to Victor Vallance, LPRAs board member at [vwallance@gmail.com](mailto:vwallance@gmail.com)

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

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

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

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

This work is only possible because of our great volunteers and your support. The LPRAs depends on motivated volunteers and neighbours' generosity via donations and membership fees. The LPRAs has no other source of funding. If not a member, please become a supporting member today. If you were a member or possibly your membership has expired, please renew your membership. You can become a member or renew your membership online using our secure PayPal server on our website.

If you prefer, another option is to download and print the membership form and send it in with your cheque by mail to Cedric Lam. LPRAs treasurer at [cedriclam281@gmail.com](mailto:cedriclam281@gmail.com) . The fee for a one-year membership is \$50 or consider a three-year membership for \$140. Thank you and we appreciate all your support.