

The Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association

Fall Newsletter 2023

What's Happening in the Park



Photo Courtesy of Lutz Fullgraf

Hello Neighbours,

Over the past number of months the LPRA has been focussing on key issues affecting Lawrence Park residents namely 1) assisting property owners who are impacted by the ever increasing number of new residential developments in the neighbourhood; 2) working to improve safety and the awareness on the rising number of break-ins and car thefts in the neighbourhood; and 3) liaising with our City Councillor to resolve key issues affecting our community. As a reminder, if you are not a member of the Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association (LPRA) or were a past member, please join the LPRA today. Information as to how to join and why you should join are included at the end of this newsletter.

LPRA's 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) Planned for Thursday, October 26th @7pm

Please mark your calendar for this year's AGM to be held on Thursday, October 26th at 7pm. The board is planning this year (after four years of holding AGM meetings by Zoom) to conduct the AGM meeting in-person. A location for the AGM is currently being worked on. When finalized, a notice will be sent to all LPRA members informing them of the meeting details along with a copy of the 2023 financial statements and the minutes from the 2022 AGM. Member and non-member residents are all welcome to attend the AGM.

In conjunction with the usual AGM proceedings, our City councillor Jaye Robinson will attend the AGM to address and answer questions. On the agenda will also hold a town hall with police officers from 53 division of the Toronto Police Services (TPS) to discuss neighbourhood concerns over the high rate of break-ins and car thefts. This will be an opportunity for AGM attendees to hear directly from our division officers as to what is being done to reduce crime in the neighbourhood and what, as residents, we can do to prevent theft and break-ins. The police officers will be able to address traffic and safety concerns as well. The planned format of the town hall is to have attendees submit written questions for the police officers and these questions will be asked by the moderator of the town hall.

Car Thefts and Break-ins Continue to be a Major Problem

The occurrence of car thefts and break-ins has become almost a daily event in our neighbourhood. Either we have experienced it first-hand or know someone in our neighbourhood who has had a house broken into or a vehicle stolen from their driveway. Didi Cameron, a LPRA board member, has spearheaded the "Neighbourhood Watch" program in Lawrence Park. Didi and her team of dedicated volunteers track break-ins and theft. They are keeping residents apprised of crimes and criminal activity in Lawrence Park. The team is also in constant communication with 53 Division so that they are aware and can respond.

The LPRA has made it a key priority to focus on improving safety in our neighbourhood. The organization of a town Hall at this year's AGM from 53 Division is a part of LPRA's safety initiative. If you do see a crime in progress or require emergency assistance, call 911. If you require police assistance, but it is not an emergency (i.e., reporting thefts, vandalism, fraud, or other situations where no person or property is in immediate danger) call 416-808-2222.

As a reminder, below are some simple tips that we first featured in our winter newsletter to help deter potential thieves from breaking into your home or possibly stealing your car.

Tips to prevent potential crime at your place of residence:

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.

Place your car keys in a secure spot such as a faraday pouch and keep them well away from windows and outside doors.

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

Residential Development Activity in the Neighbourhood Continues to Grow

Development activity in Lawrence Park continues to increase. To the end of August, The Lawrence Park Ratepayers Association (LPRA) has reviewed 30 housing development projects in the neighbourhood. Usually this is the number of projects that are submitted and reviewed in a single year. For many of these construction projects, the LPRA has assisted affected neighbours to find plans and other documentation in the City files, guided them through the process if requested, presented neighbourhood positions at Committee of Adjustment (CoA) hearings, participated in appeal hearings at the Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) and initiated and supported amicable solutions between owners, builders, and neighbours.

In many cases, renovation or new constructions projects are planned carefully and are not offensive to residents. In a few instances, where excessively large projects are proposed and require numerous by-law variances, the LPRA will align with affected neighbours and intervene and oppose a project to protect the character of Lawrence Park. This could be avoided if builders at the initial planning stage were more proactive and informed surrounding neighbours regarding their plans and the potential impact on surrounding properties. However, often the first notice of the construction plans is only revealed when they appear on the agenda for a CoA hearing. Realizing that filing deadlines in these instances become very short, many builders may try to solicit last minute letters of support before the hearings. At that point, these efforts are often unsuccessful because the time is too short for a complete evaluation of the plans and for meaningful discussion.

The LPRA will continue to support new development in the neighbourhood that is consistent with and reinforces the character of Lawrence Park. Excessively large projects that do not fit with the character of the neighbourhood, propose excessive and numerous by-law variances and/or lack green space cherished by residents need to be challenged. Planned removals of trees at new projects also raise frequent concerns. In these circumstances the LPRA will intervene and support objecting neighbours before and during hearings. When needed, Councillor Jaye Robinson's office will support the LPRA and neighbours with letters of objections and opening doors to city services.

We Want To Hear From You

The LPRA has been representing the interests of LPRA residents for decades. We would like to hear from you regarding the LPRA's initiatives and mandate. What can the LPRA do better? What new initiatives should the LPRA take on? What events (such as a walking tour of the

neighbourhood) should the LPRA organize or sponsor? What initiatives should the LPRA not support? What is your general view of the LPRA and its mandate? We will compile all submissions, discuss at an upcoming LPRA board meeting, and make changes where best determined. Please forward your comments by e-mail to Victor Vallance, LPRA board member at vwallance@gmail.com .

A Way to Raise Awareness for Not-For-Profit Activities in the Neighbourhood

The LPRA welcomes not-for-profit organizations that plan on hosting an event or activity in Lawrence Park to use the LPRA quarterly newsletter as an outlet to reach the community. If interested please contact by e-mail Victor Vallance, LPRA board member at vwallance@gmail.com to discuss details. We are interested in helping not-for-profit organizations in the community to get their message out.

How and Why, You Should 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 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 LPRA depends on motivated volunteers and neighbours’ generosity via donations and membership fees. The LPRA has no other source of funding. If you are 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, LPRA treasurer, at Box 239, 3219 Yonge Street, Toronto ON M4N 3S1. The fee for a one-year membership is only \$50, or three-years for \$140. Thank you and we appreciate all your support!