**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings to all members and former members. This is the first newsletter we've sent out in a long time but I can assure you that more will be following as we do our very best to keep up the lines of communication over the coming months.

Over the past two years, the OPA has, for various reasons, suffered the loss of several directors including our past President Phil Mohtadi. This has made it very difficult for the remaining board members to function as effectively as they would have wished as it severely limited the physical and financial resources available to them. That core group of long term directors deserves our deep gratitude for their perseverance through a period of great difficulty. Thanks to them we have been able to add several new directors since the beginning of the year to share in the strengthening of the OPA as we move forward.

With the larger number of directors available to assist in our projects we have been able, as a team, to make an effective presentation at the Oriole Park School May Fair where we attracted several new members, assisted by OPA member Arleigh Crawford, re-activated our previously dormant website, evolved detailed plans for a neighbourhood “Movie Night” to be scheduled for next spring, updated and revised our membership list and held an Annual General Meeting on June 4 to supplant the AGM that would normally have been held in October 2008. We plan to have our 2009 Annual General Meeting this year on October 28 as we have done in the past.

While our team is pleased with these achievements, there remains a great deal yet to be accomplished and for that, we need your support. You are receiving this newsletter because you are either a current member of the OPA or have previously been a member. If you were a member in the past and have let your membership lapse, we urge you to renew now. Obviously, at one time you recognized the value in joining the association; that value is still there and as we move ahead into the challenges of the coming years, a strong neighbourhood voice is essential.

We want and need your support. Connected to this letter is a [membership form](http://www.orioleparkassociation.com/Membership.html) which you may use to update your personal info if required. Otherwise, you may simply forward a renewal cheque to the OPA c/o Steven Sims, Treasurer, 130 Eastbourne Ave. Toronto, M5P 2G6.

And finally, please look in at our website from time to time - [www.orioleparkassociation.com](http://www.orioleparkassociation.com/). We will increasingly use the website to post current information on what the association is doing and as we go forward we will be working hard to improve it in all respects, but particularly as an interactive means of communication.

**Welcome to the Oriole Park Association**

Our neighbourhood is approximately 80 years old, and for close to 40 years the OPA has represented the interests of our community.

Membership in the OPA reinforces a sense of neighbourhood and pride in our community. The OPA is our advocate on matters that affect us all such as planning, development, traffic and safety. It represents our interests at City Hall and Queen’s Park, and works with our elected representatives at both levels of government to protect and enhance our community.

The OPA works with surrounding residents associations and is a founding member of FoNTRA, the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations, an umbrella group which represents residents on key matters affecting residential neighbourhoods and city planning.

The OPA is committed to maintaining working relationships with Oriole Park Public School and the Toronto Police Service - 53 Division, to strengthen our neighbourhood.

**Oriole Park Association, Annual General Meeting - June 4th, 2009**

On June 4th, 2009, the Oriole Park Association, held an Annual General Meeting, at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre. About 35 area residents attended and asked questions about various planning issues. We wanted to renew our ties to the community and to encourage residents to sign up as new OPA members.

Michael Visser, OPA Board member, who chaired the meeting, introduced Terry Mills and Lauralyn Johnston our guest speakers, and thanked Councillor Michael Walker and Chris Sellors his executive assistant, who both attended, for their work on planning issues relating to Yonge-Eglinton especially pertaining to the strata plan.

We introduced our new Oriole Park Association Board, as shown on our web site. The following Board members were formally elected for the Year 2009-2010:

Bob Blake, President
Steve Sims, Treasurer
Richard MacFarlane, Secretary
Shelley Ortved
Michael Visser
Scott Blair
Martha Roberts
Greg McKhool

Terry Mills, former OPA Board member and a veteran planning and design consultant, and Lauralyn Johnston, urban planner and a director of the Lytton Park Residents’ Organization, gave a slide presentation about the RioCan planning application for proposed redevelopment of the Yonge-Eglinton Centre.

Michael Visser concluded the meeting by thanking our guest speakers and those in attendance for their ideas, comments, and for signing up as new members of the Oriole Park Association.

We plan to have our 2009 Annual General Meeting this year on October 28 at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre. We’ll be sending out a reminder soon with more information.

**RioCan Proposal, North-West Corner of Yonge & Eglinton**

RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust, the owners of the Yonge-Eglinton Centre, have applied to the city for a rezoning that would allow them to build a 3 storey retail store in the current public square and to add 5 and 7 storeys to their two existing office towers. The public square was promised to the City of Toronto by the original developers of the site in exchange for city property, and height and density bonuses. The attempt to revise this agreement, as well as the lack of open space in the area, has caused a great deal of public concern about this proposal.

To address some of these concerns a public meeting was hosted by Councillor Karen Stintz at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre on June 11th, 2009. City of Toronto planning staff and RioCan officials were on hand to answer questions about the application. Approximately 120 residents attended.

Among the residents attending were OPA Board members Michael Visser, Shelley Ortved, Greg McKhool, and Richard MacFarlane. Former OPA Board member Ann Lovering also attended. Lauralyn Johnston of the Lytton Park Residents’ Organization, and planning consultant Terry Mills both attended, with Lauralyn giving a presentation about the site and some possible alternatives.

A sample of public comments included:

1. Two main concerns are height and density
2. What will be the shadow and wind shear effects from tall buildings?
3. We want use at all times of the year
4. There is a lack of seating in the open square
5. Make it not only a larger open space but a better one
6. Is a 3-storey building minimum required to make this economical?

**TTC Bus Lands**

As most of you know, the TTC would like to redevelop the former bus bays between Yonge Street and Duplex Avenue. Many area residents expressed concerns about the density of any future development and the need for height limits. Councillor Walker was able to have a motion passed by City Council creating a “strata plan” to restrict the height on this site to 120 meters. In order to enshrine this strata plan in the city’s Official Plan the OPA has joined an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board as described below.

*Ontario Municipal Board – Appeal of Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment*

On March 16th, 2009, a letter was submitted to the City of Toronto by the South Eglinton Ratepayers’ and Residents Association (SERRA), and registered with the Ontario Municipal Board, on behalf of area ratepayers’ associations.

The letter appeals City of Toronto bylaw amendments for the Yonge-Eglinton Centre. It states that at both the June 2006 and January 2009 City of Toronto public meetings, the inclusion of a “strata plan” was supported by City staff and residents. The initial defeat of Councillor Michael Walker’s motion on February 25th, 2009 is contrary to the conclusions arrived at in good faith by the Yonge-Eglinton Centre Focused Working Group. Further, it does not reflect the spirit and intent of the Zoning Bylaw.

*Oriole Park Association Letter – OMB Appeal*

In support of the South Eglinton Ratepayers’ and Residents Association (SERRA), the Oriole Park Association delivered a July 31st, 2009 letter to the Ontario Municipal Board pre-hearing session on August 4th which supports the Ontario Municipal Board appeal and agrees with the strata plan approach to limiting height and density on city-owned land.

*Ontario Municipal Board Pre-Hearing of August 4th, 2009*

At the OMB pre-hearing on August 4th, SERRA expressed its concern about the TTC lands, that the wording about zoning is deficient. The City of Toronto strike during June/July created a backlog of delayed public meetings. Future scheduling is uncertain but the parties agreed to continue their communications.

The Oriole Park Association has been granted “participant status” at the upcoming OMB hearing.