



SANDY HILL • CÔTE-DE-SABLE

Action Sandy Hill Board Meeting

April 29 2012

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Rencontre du Conseil d'administration d'Action Côte-de-Sable

Le 29 avril, 2012

www.ash-acs.ca

Courriel: info@ash-acs.ca

Present/Présents: Sam Almsaddi, Eric Audet, François Bregha, Christopher Collmorgen, Alice Kwong, Claire MacDonald, Kyle Simunovic, John Verbaas.

Regrets/Absents: Sophie Beecher, Julie Crôteau, Jane Gurr, Christopher Hynes, Elaine Koren, Jawad Quereshi.

1. Welcome and introductions

Christopher Collmorgen welcomed Board members and the more than 50 residents in attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Review and approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved. Given the fact that the Councillor could only arrive later, some items were shuffled to defer the discussion of house conversions until his arrival.

3. Approval of minutes

François moved (Kyle seconded) that the minutes of the March meeting be approved (carried).

4. Comment from the floor

One resident spoke against Ottawa building a casino downtown, commended the Councillor for opposing it and urged the community to continue opposing its construction.

5. Farmers' Market

Two residents will help organize a satellite farmers' market in Sandy Hill with produce from the Main St farmers' market. The market will be held one Saturday per month and will coincide with other community events (Bettye Hyde yard sale in June, St Alban's in July, Strathcona art in the park in August, Fall BBQ at Sandy Hill park in September).

6. Special events

François reported on the ASH AGM preparations. Several organizations have been offered tables to display information about their activities and the invited guest speakers have all accepted. François reminded Board members to show up before 6 pm on May 16 to set up the hall.

ASH has reluctantly decided not to send a delegate to the Town and Gown AGM to be held in Windsor this year due to costs and distance. It was noted that the Police, By-law Services, the Councillor's office and the University of Ottawa Off-campus Housing were all planning to attend this meeting.

7. Membership and outreach

Kyle reported that the ASH website was now more functional and that in the next few days residents would be able to purchase memberships on-line via PayPal. He will set up a training session for directors on how to use Dropbox.

One resident expressed concern that the new ASH by-laws, which were approved at the AGM in 2012, now allow individuals who do not live in Sandy Hill but own businesses in the neighbourhood to become members of the Association and even be elected directors. She asked how many residents had participated at the 2012 AGM.

8. Spring clean-up

Claire reported on the clean-up of Strathcona park on April 27. Over 40 volunteers turned up, including members of the Strathcona Heights Islamic Centre. Claire thanked the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre for its support and participation as well as Ayoub's and Timothy's for having provided pastries and coffee. She was presented with a certificate of recognition for her coordination the event by the City of Ottawa.

9. Planning, Development and Transportation

Temporary closure of King Edward Ave.

King Edward will be closed between Templeton and Somerset for two weekends in May and traffic re-routed on Nelson and Templeton as part of the construction of the University of Ottawa Photonics Laboratory. Details of the closure to be posted on the website.

ASH is concerned about the short notice given and the City's acceptance of the University's road closure proposal. It has suggested that the City investigate detour proposals that would not impact the neighbourhood as much.

Rideau Centre Expansion

Cadillac-Fairview will make a presentation on May 14 about the expansion of the shopping centre. ASH will report back to the community.

Building conversions

Nathaniel Mullin of Councillor Fleury's office explained that the City's Planning Department would lead a study on how better to regulate building conversions and would be seeking public input. The study will look at existing zoning and the rules governing rooming houses. Several residents in attendance asked questions or made comments.

Q: What is the status of current applications to convert houses?

A: Only applications that were complete on the day the freeze was announced will be allowed to proceed. Only two or three applications are believed to have been complete the day of the freeze and not yet approved (these conversions are likely to proceed although the Councillor can refer the matter to Planning Committee).

Q: How many applications were made in the last year under the pilot bylaw imposing a “site development light” process?

A: Five or six.

Q: How long will the interim by-law be in place?

A: City staff believe they can draft new rules in about 6 months. They want to do so before any appeal is heard by the OMB (it was unclear from the discussion how quickly such an appeal might be launched and therefore how much time the City had to develop the new rules. Some people believed it was more than a year).

The following comments were made:

- Residents thanked the City for the temporary freeze in building conversions. Several asked that the City set lower zoning limits in Sandy Hill and require bigger set-backs to new construction.
- It would be helpful if more information was available to residents. The City should create a page on its website where residents could find out how many applications for conversions had been made and how many approved.
- The Official Plan states that Sandy Hill should expect “modest” population growth in the future. Residents expressed concern that this is not what is happening. The City should return to the vision for Sandy Hill set out in the Official Plan.
- There is no real difference between a rooming house and a “bunkhouse”. Although a bunkhouse nominally rents apartments rather than rooms, some landlords are renting rooms individually.
- Families are leaving Sandy Hill because house conversions make the neighbourhood unappealing. One departing resident said that he felt he was “being evicted” from the house in which he had lived for 20 years by the construction of a bunkhouse next door.
- Financial disincentives and current rules on rooming houses are strict and discourage landlords from self-declaring that they are operating a rooming house.
- It is difficult to get baseline information on who lives in Sandy Hill, complicating sound policy development. Because there is a lot of transience, it is difficult to estimate the number of students in the neighbourhood. It is believed that about half the residents are now students.
- We need to convince the University to build new residences. We need to bring our MPP into the conversation since the Province finances universities. The private sector might be interested in building new residences for students.
- The City should apply its existing zoning rules more vigorously.
- The City should include in its review the increased demand for parking resulting from building conversions.
- It would be useful if the ASH website could include information on the development process, the status of current proposals and consultation opportunities.

ASH will strike a committee to review zoning in Sandy Hill and provide this input to the City as it looks at how it will manage conversions across the City and as it prepares its Infill Guidelines II.

560 Rideau

The Councillor noted that it was important that residents attend the public meeting on May 8 and make their views heard. He said he would support the community but wanted to see first what people had to say and how the developer responded. Mr Fleury can also facilitate meetings with Peter Hume and Jan Harder, as needed.

People in attendance made the following comments:

- It would be useful to know what the City's Planning Committee has recently said about other applications to build high-rises in areas zoned for lower buildings.
- The rezoning process has become a game where developers deliberately ask for a large increase in zoning as a bargaining ploy to get the community to compromise. The City should not accept applications that are inconsistent with established zoning.
- For Rideau St, the Official Plan, the Sandy Hill Community Plan and the Uptown Rideau Plan all agree that height limits should be 6 stories. The City should encourage development that is consistent and not allow a mix of low rise and high rise buildings.

353 Friel

The City has informed the developer that it has to provide 8000 square feet of common amenity space. The developer is considering his options and may ask for a variance. ASH is opposed to that space being provided on the building's roof.

10. Adjournment

Christopher thanked the many people in attendance, urged those who had not done so to join ASH and invited all to attend the AGM on May 16. The meeting adjourned at 9.26.