

CCFEW NEWS

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

April 2006

Annual General Meeting



We're Now On The Web!

CCFEW's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, May 8th, at Storefront Humber, beginning at 7:00 pm. 2445 Lakeshore Blvd W. (at Mimico Ave.) Our guest speaker will be Suzanne Barrett. She will be speaking about the upcoming report card on the Etobicoke-Mimico Watershed.

We will also be electing our Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting. The board positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Serving on the board is a rewarding experience. It does not necessarily require a large commitment of time, just a commitment to your community.

If you are interested in becoming more involved, but don't want to commit to being a member of the executive, our monthly planning meetings are normally held on the second Monday of each month (except July and August). Everyone is welcome to attend.

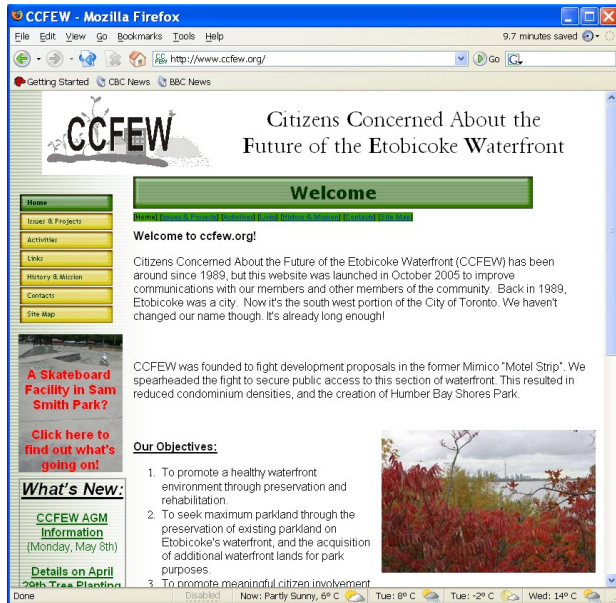
A special resolution will be introduced at the AGM which will direct the board to seek an environmental assessment of the proposed skateboard facility at Colonel Samuel Smith Park. For more background on this issue, see the story on page 2.

Last October CCFEW launched our own website. It had been considered for a while as a nice thing to have, but it was the skateboard facility issue that really made clear the advantage of having a means to communicate to a broad range of people in a timely fashion. The timing was also right because the cost of maintaining a site has dropped dramatically over the last few years. The cost of maintaining a website for a year, without advertisements, is roughly the same as printing and mailing one newsletter. The website won't completely eliminate printed newsletters, but will replace them as the primary means of communicating with our members. It provides a very timely and cost effective means of communication

There is currently a large portion of the site devoted to the skateboard park issue, but there is also an "Activities" page listing a variety of upcoming events and meetings. The "Bird Walks" page lists upcoming walks and has sub-pages with information and photos from past walks. We have a page devoted to each of the major waterfront parks in Etobicoke. These pages will grow as we build the site further. Our "Links" page provides links to a wide variety of local groups and services. In total, there are currently 31 pages on the site with probably half that number again of pdf files. Further suggestions and contributions of content are always welcome.

The website has already proved useful in

generating new members and making contact with people who otherwise would never have heard of CCFEW.



The Year In Review

CCFEW's main focus for the past year has been the proposal to build a regional skateboard facility in Colonel Samuel Smith Park. You can read all about it in great detail on our website, www.ccfew.org, but this is a summary of the last year's events. We first learned of it early last spring, and we have been actively involved in the process ever since. We have many concerns about the suitability of this site for a skateboard facility, but they can all be summarized in two key points:

Compatibility - This is an active, "urban" facility placed in a naturalized park setting. It poses risks to the integrity of those naturalized areas.

Safety - Skateboard parks are normally located in busy areas with good opportunities for drive-by surveillance at all times of day, not hidden away in wooded areas.

We have never involved ourselves with questions about whether or not this type of facility is the best way to serve the recreational needs of our youth. That decision had already been made. We have been concerned only with the location.

We first met with City Parks Department staff in early

June last year to discuss this project. They were primarily interested in Sam Smith Park from the outset, but did ultimately short list three other sites.

There was one public meeting, on June 20th last year when all four sites were discussed. At this meeting, and all through the process, the other sites: Ourland, Connorvale, and Don Russell Parks have received very little attention. CCFEW has no objection to any of these alternate sites.

We printed and distributed several hundred flyers to nearby houses and park visitors in advance of the June 20th public meeting to make people aware of what was being proposed.

Many of us left the June 20th meeting feeling very discouraged, because the tone of the meeting strongly suggested that it was an information meeting rather than a consultation meeting. It certainly appeared that the decision had already been made.

We had comment sheets available at the July 9th Environment Day listing all four sites under consideration. Of the 22 sheets returned to us, there were 21 opposed to Sam Smith as the location, and one in favour. Copies of all the sheets were forwarded to the parks department.

At about the same time, a local resident started a petition against locating the skateboard facility at Sam Smith Park. The petition was sent to the City with over 800 signatures.

During the winter, long after any public consultation, we learned that the \$500,000 skateboard facility would be built in combination with a \$2,000,000 ice skating path. This path had been proposed when the park was created, and now it is back. Somehow, a skating path around a skateboard facility doesn't seem the same as a path through the trees. It will mean a tremendous amount of pavement adjacent to a naturalized area. From what we've seen, even the planners are having trouble figuring out how to squeeze it all in.

On January 6, CCFEW appeared before the board of the TRCA to encourage them to take a strong stand in defense of Colonel Samuel Smith Park. We were well received by the board, and they unanimously adopted

some strongly worded resolutions which we believed would ensure further public input on the site selection process. It appears in the City's view, these resolutions relate to consultation *after* the site has been selected.

It was clear when the staff report was released on March 6th, that Sam Smith Park was the only site given thorough consideration. The report reads more as a justification of a decision made a year earlier than an analysis of alternatives.

CCFEW, along with the Toronto Ornithological Club, and several private citizens made deputations when the matter was discussed at the Parks and Economic Development Committee meeting. The report was "received" (approved) by the committee, and it went to City Council for final approval in April.

So, now what? We are encouraging people to tell their councillor, the mayor, and their MPP that they think this is the wrong place for a skateboard facility. It is not too late for politicians to reverse this decision. We will also be voting on a special resolution at our Annual General Meeting on May 8th. This resolution will authorize CCFEW to seek an environmental assessment of the Sam Smith Park location. We believe there have been a number of flaws in the process which justify this action.

And Now A Word From Our Sponsor...

After several years of continuous sponsorship, the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation decided not to fund the walks last year. All of our walks since November have been sponsored by Birds and Beans. Their sponsorship seems particularly appropriate since their business is roasting and selling Bird Friendly[®], shade grown coffee. The connection between birds and coffee isn't obvious in Canada, and it doesn't get much attention here. The connection is in Central and South America, where the coffee is grown, and where many of our North American birds spend the winter.

Traditionally, coffee was grown in the shade of larger trees in the understory of tropical forests. This type of farming is a polyculture which provides habitat to a wide range of species including many birds. A more

common type of farming today is a monoculture of sun tolerant coffee plants.

The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center has developed a certification system for shade grown coffee that they call Bird Friendly[®]. They describe it this way:

Simply put, "Bird Friendly[®]" coffee is coffee that comes from farms in Latin America that provide good, forest-like habitat for birds. Rather than being grown on land that has been cleared of all other vegetation, "Bird Friendly[®]" coffees are planted under a canopy of trees. Because of the shaded, forest-like setting created by these canopy trees, coffee produced this way is called *shade-grown*. Not only are "Bird Friendly[®]" coffees shade-grown, they are also *organic*, meaning they're grown without the use of chemical pesticides which poison the environment.

"Bird Friendly[®]" coffees are the *only* coffees on the market that are certified as shade-grown and organic by an independent third-party inspector using criteria established by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center of the National Zoo. These criteria are based on years of scientific research. Companies that sell "Bird Friendly[®]" coffees contribute 25 cents per pound to support Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center research and conservation programs.

Shade-grown coffee generally costs a bit more, but coffee experts say its richer flavour comes from the slower ripening of the beans. You won't find any mention of shade-grown coffee at the major coffee retail chains, but you can experience the difference for yourself at Birds & Beans, 2413 Lakeshore Boulevard West (at Mimico Ave.)

Salmon In Mimico Creek

Last October, while helping with a survey to document fish barriers in Mimico Creek, my surveying partner and I came across a very clear indication of the importance of the survey. The creek is in a concrete channel as it passes under the Gardiner Expressway.

The first barrier from the lake is a step in this concrete section. This is where we found 15 dead salmon. One had made it over the barrier, only to die in the shallow

waters above. The others had all died below the barrier. The bottom was littered with salmon eggs. Clearly these fish want to use the creek for spawning. We need to give them back the means to do it. This survey is one of the activities undertaken by the Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Watersheds Coalition.



CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Monday, May 8th, 7:00 p.m.
at Storefront Humber, 2445
Lakeshore Blvd W. (at Mimico Ave.).
(see page 1 for more details)

Bird Walk Saturday May 27 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Colonel Samuel Smith Park

Meet in the south parking lot
Meet at 9:00 am, rain or shine.
Sponsored by Birds & Beans

CCFEW Contacts

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the Etobicoke Waterfront*

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Keeping In Touch

Our e-mail list will be moving again! We started with a list service from Hotmail, and then moved to Yahoo Groups. We will soon be moving again to a new system which will be more convenient for users and administration. We will move everyone from the Yahoo list on to the new list, but there will also be a simple way to sign up on our website and of course there will be an unsubscribe link at the bottom of each message. There will also be an option to receive messages in plain text (as they are now) or in html, which allows graphics and different fonts. Watch for the new sign-up link on our "Contacts" page.



*This newsletter was printed on recycled paper
containing 30% post-consumer fiber.*

CCFEW Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Individual : \$10 ___ Family : \$15 ___ Institutions/Corporate : \$25 ___

Mail this form along with a cheque/money order payable to "CCFEW" to:

CCFEW, 6 Meaford Avenue, Etobicoke, Ontario M8V 2H5