

CCFEW NEWS

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

April 2007

Annual General Meeting



Skateboard Park Update

CCFEW's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 18th**, at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Community Room.

Our Guest Speaker will be Laura Stephenson of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. She will be presenting the plans to create a major new waterfront park at the Arsenal Lands. This will include the western half of what is now Marie Curtis Park and the adjoining former industrial lands on the Toronto/Mississauga border. The final plans, going for Municipal approval in Toronto and Mississauga early this year, are very similar to those outlined in our February 2005 newsletter. The amenities, parking, and intensive use areas will be concentrated close to Lakeshore Boulevard, with the areas closer to the lake reserved mainly for passive use and natural regeneration. The plan includes a complete transformation of Marie Curtis Park West. It also shows some changes on the East side, but those changes will happen as part of a separate process.

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.

People who were following along on our website last summer and fall saw regular updates of the status of the proposed skateboard facility at Colonel Samuel Smith Park. CCFEW, along with many other community members strongly believed that Sam Smith Park was the wrong place to build this facility. After it became apparent that the City was not prepared to address our concerns, we applied to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to have the project designated under the Environmental Assessment Act. Our submission detailed four reasons for making the request:

- The environmental impact of the City's proposal had not been evaluated within the context of current natural heritage policies
- There had been no adequate evaluation of alternatives to the current proposal
- There had been a lack of transparency and consultation in the decision making process
- The Province has an historic and ongoing connection and involvement in The Lakeshore Grounds.

While the City has backed away from this plan publicly and politically, they have never unequivocally ruled it out in their communications with us or the MOE, so we have never formally withdrawn our request for the designation. The MOE have never formally rejected or endorsed our application, so the entire

EA process is on hold – hopefully for good.

The turning point in the debate came on July 5th, when 120 – 150 uninvited guests showed up for a meeting where the plans were being presented to the Lakeshore Grounds Stakeholders (since renamed the “Lakeshore Grounds Coordinating Committee”). This show of concern by local residents generated such attention to the issue that Councillor Mark Grimes initiated a process to review the decision.

The review was conducted by Councillor Glenn deBaeremaeker in August and September. He met with community groups and residents to gather information. The message he heard from the community groups, including the South Etobicoke Skateboard Association, was “Good Idea, Bad Location”. When he released his report on September 26th, he stated, “...my recommendation to Councillor Grimes is that the skateboard park should not be located at the proposed location within Colonel Sam Smith Park because of ecological, historical and recreational reasons.”

The sad irony of this result is that the skateboarders are still left with no facility, and the City is showing very little interest in finding an alternative location before the funding runs out. The skateboarders' voices in opposition to the Sam Smith site effectively removed any criticisms of NIMBY-ism, but they are the ones who still haven't won.

New Friends for Sam Smith

The issue of the proposed skateboard park convinced some New Toronto and Long Branch residents that Sam Smith Park needed a group to keep an eye on it. Last November, the informal coalition of individuals and groups who united in response to the skatepark proposal formed the genesis of a new group: the Friends of Sam Smith Park. Co-chaired by long-time residents Angela

Giraudy and Allan Valk, the group is made up of area residents and park users who are committed to protecting, preserving and enhancing the site. Making friends with a park is not a completely new concept in Toronto—Dufferin Grove Park is supported by an active community group called the Friends of Dufferin Grove Park.

According to Angela Giraudy, “Initially, we banded together to deal with the issue of the skateboard park, but we found many people were interested in forming a permanent group. Our community wants to be more involved in determining the development and future of our park. We're not against change, but we want public consultation before changes are made.” Many residents feel passionate about the park, perhaps because they have closely followed its development from a raw landfill site in the early 1980s, to its present state as a unique greenspace that is a haven for birds, butterflies and wildlife.

Meetings of the Friends of Sam Smith are listed on our [Activities](http://www.ccfew.org/html/activities.html) page, www.ccfew.org/html/activities.html You can also get more information by contacting them directly at friendsofsamsmith@gmail.com

Mimico Linear Park Update

Last July, construction of the Mimico Linear Park finally began. The project has been broken into two phases. Phase one, currently under construction, runs south-west from Superior avenue to Norris Crescent. The park will be largely complete by late this year, with the official opening in the spring of next year. The start date of Phase two is unknown. The TRCA has still not been able to acquire all of the property required to complete that section.

The lake filling for Phase 1 is almost complete.

By the end of November last year, nearly 5000 truckloads of fill (rubble and earth) had been used. All loads are inspected before and after unloading to make sure they are uncontaminated and suitable for use as lake fill.



A construction access road now cuts off the embayment area from the rest of the lake. Before it was completely closed off, the TRCA sent in an electro-fishing team to make sure there were no fish left inside. By sealing off this area, they will be able to work on the embayment area this spring. Conservation regulations prohibit disturbance of the lake bottom during the breeding season, but now this area is temporarily not part of the lake. Later this summer or fall, the construction road will be removed, leaving just the string of habitat islands across the mouth of the wetland embayment.

CCFEW Website

In our last newsletter, we announced the creation of the CCFEW website. The site has continued to grow and develop. It attracts a steady stream of visitors, with significant peaks in traffic when there are important events taking place. It saw a lot of visitors in the heat of the skateboard park debate as well as during last fall's municipal election. The Activities page is always one of the most popular pages. At time of writing, there are 15 events listed there.

The website continues to be an important tool to keep our members and the community informed of what's happening along the Etobicoke waterfront. It allows us to provide far more information and graphics in a much more timely and cost efficient manner than we could ever hope to do with newsletters. More information on all of the items covered in this newsletter is available at www.ccfew.org

An Ice Skating Track at Sam Smith Park

Many of those who knew, had long forgotten about the idea of building an ice skating track near the Power House at Colonel Sam Smith Park. It was in the original master plan for the park, but we hadn't heard it discussed as a serious possibility again until last year when it appeared along side the proposed skateboard facility. Although it appeared to be a low profile add-on to the skateboard facility, it was actually a much larger budget item. The plans prepared by the City last year showed the skating and skateboarding facilities designed together as a package. They are now planning for an ice skating track as initially proposed.

We haven't seen an official announcement yet, but there will be a **public meeting** to discuss the ice skating track on **April 19th, 7:00 pm at the Power House**. It appears this will be an initial consultation and that no new plans have yet been prepared.

Bird Walks

Our Bird Walks continue to be our most successful way of connecting people with the waterfront environment. They draw good numbers of participants even in some very

unpleasant weather. It's impossible to plan the weather when the dates are picked months in advance, so we've had our share of windy, rainy days.

One of our more spectacular sightings last year was a Great Egret at Sam Smith Park in June. They are becoming more common in Toronto, and may someday be commonplace, but for now they are still quite a sight. Those brave enough to venture out for our cold November walk were rewarded with a flock of Eastern Bluebirds at the base of the water tower at the Arsenal Lands. Ruddy Ducks are uncommon in Toronto, especially in winter, but we found them on both our December and February walks.



Our March walk was wet again and colder than most people were dressed for, but yielded some good sightings. Among the 30 species found were several White-winged scoters and a single Tundra Swan.

We are very pleased to have Birds and Beans as the permanent sponsor of all our walks. Their products are a good fit with our objectives, and their coffee shop is a popular destination after a chilly winter walk at Humber Bay.

Parklawn Road Streetcar Loop

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is proposing to construct a new streetcar turn-around loop in the south-west corner of Park Lawn Road and Lake Shore Boulevard West at the location of the existing bus loop. The idea is to replace the existing Humber Loop with a loop at Park Lawn Road

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held at the Polish Alliance Hall on November 22nd. We believe that the project is ill conceived, and premature. The TTC has not presented a convincing case for the new loop, and it doesn't seem to fit with their long-term goals.

We expressed these views in a letter to the TTC, which stated in part:

Our initial concern with the project was the impact on parkland as a result of the increased area of the TTC turning loop required to accommodate streetcars. We remain concerned about the erosion of parkland in an area which will see greatly increased residential development in the next few years. However, we are also concerned that this project offers little or no short-term benefit, and may not fit with the long-term transit strategy. The project appears to be justified on the basis that it will create vastly increased ridership on the Lakeshore streetcar line. What it fails to consider is that the streetcar will remain an unattractive route to downtown until serious congestion problems are addressed further east.

The TTC clearly recognizes those problems and is taking steps to address them with the proposed new streetcar line from the CNE loop to Roncesvalles. It is premature to discuss a new turning loop or its location until those line

extensions have been finalized. Parklawn may be too far east for a turning loop. If the streetcars are short-turned further west or not at all, it will greatly enhance access from the condominiums in the Humber Bay Shores area to the shopping districts in Mimico & New Toronto.

Since then, new transit proposals have been unveiled which show a light rapid transit line running along Queensway, not Lakeshore Boulevard, making the project even more questionable.

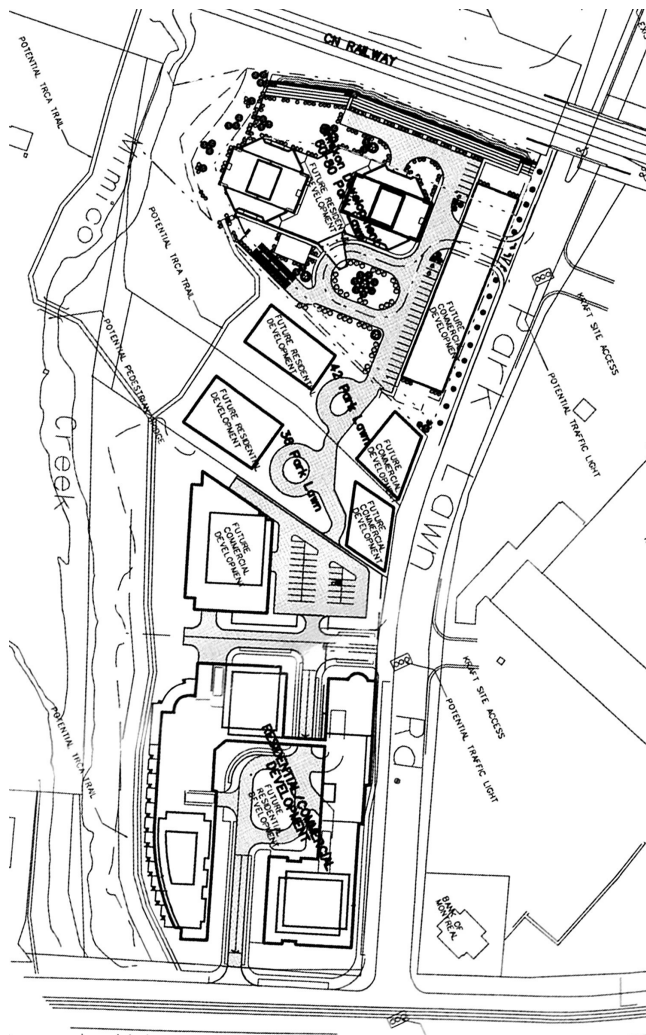
Parklawn Road Development

Two developers, Amexon Holdings Inc. and the Menkes Lakeshore Ltd. recently appealed a rezoning application to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), and won. The land in question is the block bounded by Parklawn Road, Lakeshore Boulevard, Mimico Creek, and the CN railway. They were turned down by the City of Toronto, but in October the OMB granted approval for nearly 1800 new residential units plus an undetermined additional number of units on the parcel of land in between.

The Menkes proposal, at the corner of Lakeshore Blvd East and Parklawn Road, has three towers with a total of 1200 units. Each tower would sit atop a two to three story retail podium. The Amexon proposal consists of two residential towers with a total of 588 units sitting on a commercial/amenity podium.

We are concerned about the impact on Mimico Creek, but the more obvious concern is traffic. The roads in the area are already congested, and Humber Bay Shores is only half built-out. Add turning streetcars into the mix (see page 4), and it's not an appealing prospect to many residents.

You can find more detailed maps and drawings, plus the whole OMB decision at www.ccfew.org/html/development.html



CCFEW Contacts

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CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, April 18th, 7:00 p.m.
at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street
(see page 1 for more details)

CCFEW Bird Walks



Saturday, April 28th
Saturday, May 26th
Saturday, June 23rd

9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
rain or shine

at **Colonel Samuel Smith Park**
(meet in the south parking lot)
Sponsored by Birds & Beans

COLONEL SAMUEL SMITH PARK CLEAN UP

Meet on the path. South / East of the Marina
(look for the banners)

Sunday, 22 April 2007

Start 9 AM (ALL DAY)

Meet your neighbours and enjoy the day.

Bring along your gloves, boots, rakes, shovels and friends.

Don't forget to pack a picnic lunch.

For more information call:

Alan Roy
(H) 416 201-8407

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CCFEW Membership Renewal Form

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Address: _____

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

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

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