

CCFEW NEWS

Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

April 2008

Annual General Meeting



Sam Smith Skating Trail

CCFEW's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 13, in the large meeting room at the Mimico Centennial Library, 47 Station Rd., at 7:00pm.

Our guest speaker will be Janette Harvey, Natural Environment Specialist with the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation department. She will be speaking about invasive plants: what they are, why we should be concerned, and what can be done about them. Invasive species could be characterized as, "super weeds". They are plants, usually non-native, that have the ability to spread rapidly and take over an area to the extent that they damage otherwise intact ecosystems. As a follow-up event to our AGM, we are organizing an Garlic Mustard Pull on May 21st at Sam Smith Park. Garlic Mustard is one of the more serious invasive plant threats in southern Ontario, but it's relatively easy to control by pulling it up by the roots. The biggest challenge is that if it gets too many years' head start, it is an impossibly big job. It's already in our parks and gardens. It's time to act!

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.

"So what's up with the skating trail at Sam Smith Park?" It's a question that comes up often, but there aren't many answers, except maybe, "nothing." Nothing is what we are hearing, but we have to assume there is more that we don't know about.

What we do know is that the money to build the ice skating trail was approved in the 2008 capital budget. We also know that the location, if and when it's built, will most likely be north-west of the Power House, somewhere between the parking lot and Father John Redmond Secondary School. We also have assurance that there will be another public meeting before anything is built.

CCFEW, along with several other groups and individuals, deputed before the City's Budget Committee, asking that funding for the ice skating trail be deferred. You can find the full text of our deputation on the "[What's Up](#)" page of our website, but our essential argument was that it was the wrong project at the wrong time. The key points we raised were:

- There should be no new construction in the park until a citizens' advisory committee is established for the park, as recommended in Councillor DeBaeremaeker's 2006 report on the skateboard park issue.
- The money would be better spent refurbishing Amos Waites Park or completing the Arsenal Lands redevelopment, both of which were shown outside the 5 year planning horizon.
- We shouldn't be spending money on a new seasonal facility with high operating costs at time that we can't afford to operate the ones

we already have. *(The City had already accepted a corporate donation to avoid a delayed opening of outdoor rinks.)*

Our efforts appeared to be in vain, as the budget was passed without amendment, but the lack of news on the project may be a good sign. Maybe someone somewhere at the City agrees with us.

Special Resolution

In light of recent developments, the CCFEW executive believes that it is time to revisit a policy position taken more than a dozen years ago. CCFEW did not object to the idea of an “ice skating trail” in the area of the Power House at Colonel Samuel Smith Park when the park's master plan was developed. Many things have changed in the intervening years, but most significantly we now understand that:

- an ice skating trail involves considerably more paved surface than we had envisioned,
- an ice skating trail requires considerably more upkeep than we had envisioned, and
- the park is under more development pressure than we had expected.

For these reasons, a special resolution will be tabled at our Annual General Meeting. The resolution states:

CCFEW opposes any additional construction or paving within Colonel Samuel Smith Park / The Lakeshore Grounds unless we are satisfied that it provides a net benefit to the ecological integrity of the park.

Humber Bay Shores Plan Review

The City of Toronto has embarked on a process to revise the secondary plan for Humber Bay Shores (a.k.a. “The Motel Strip”) now that the approved development is roughly half built. The Planning Department invited area property owners and developers to a workshop last November to assess how the plan is working, and how it can be made better. (The session was not open to the general public.) A Consultant’s Report and a Staff Report have now been released on the results of that workshop. The Humber Bay Shores Condominium Association hosted the workshop, and they have more detail about it on their website, www.humberbayshores.org.

We haven’t had time to digest and assess all 61 pages of “The Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines Update and Public Realm Plan”, but the main thrust appears to be to allow for taller thinner buildings without changing the densities or floor space indices already approved. The report also references “Design Criteria for Review of Tall Building Proposals”, a 2006 report commissioned by the City.

Taller, thinner buildings might not be a bad thing. They may even be a good thing, but there’s a lot more in the report that we need to assess. Humber Bay Shores is not an island. We need to understand how it relates to the public realm and



to the communities around it. This is right next to Mimico, where the Mimico 20/20 process is now underway. It is also next to Parklawn Road, where the OMB has approved some massive new development. How these communities develop and interact affects all of us, not just the landowners and developers in Humber Bay Shores. Hopefully this report will be just the start of a process like the one now underway in Mimico, where the public has a voice in the way the community is developed.

A formal response and position will be established at our June planning meeting.

Mimico Linear Park Nears Completion!

It has been a long wait, but the Phase 1 of the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park is set to open this summer. This section of the park will extend from Norris Crescent in the west to Superior Avenue in the east. It will feature cobble beaches and rocky headlands on the western side and a large wetland and dune feature in front of Amos Waites Park. The photo below shows the embayment area as it

appeared in mid April. This is the part that will become the wetland. The line of rock parallel to the shore on the right will form the foundation of a walkway extending all the way across the wetland. Emergent vegetation, such as cattails, will surround the shallow protected parts of the shoreline. Sunken logs are scattered around the bay to provide shelter for fish.

There will be small walking trails through the park, and the main waterfront trail will run from Norris Crescent to Superior Avenue, winding north of the wetland and dune, near the original shoreline of Amos Waites Park. For more photos and drawings of the park plans, visit http://ccfew.org/html/mimico_linear_park.html

The tentative opening date is mid July 2008, with a public opening celebration planned to follow soon after. We will be posting details on our website as soon as they are finalized.

This park is being built by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). We had feared that the city park adjoining it, Amos Waites, was being neglected in the process. There was no money in the city's capital budget, but we were given new hope at the April meeting of the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park Project Working Implementation Group when Mark Grimes announced that help is on the way. The



City already owned one of the buildings at the north east corner of the park, and has recently acquired the remaining two. They plan to demolish all three, and extend the park all the way up to Lakeshore Boulevard. The funds for the park improvement are to come from Section 37 money. *(Money is paid to the city by developers under Section 37 of the Planning Act to help pay for parks and other amenities.)*

CCFEW Bird Walks

Our series of [bird walks](#) has continued to be our most successful form of public outreach. We have had consistently well attended walks this year. There is a growing number of regular and semi-regular participants, but more importantly, we are always drawing new people. Bringing people into contact with nature on the Etobicoke waterfront is one of the key functions of the walks. People new to birding are always amazed at the diversity we find on our walks. The walks often provide opportunities for informal discussion of some of the issues facing our waterfront and its parks.



Fortunately, none of our walks had really miserable weather this year. That's impossible to predict when the dates are picked weeks or months in advance, but it worked out well. There are reports and photos from all the walks on our website, but memorable sightings from the past

year include a spectacular display of Whimbrel on our May walk, and an Osprey and Green Heron in September. Glenn Coady found us a Yellow-rumped Warbler on our February *(yes, February!)* walk, and we had great views of Harlequin ducks in both February and March. Most recently, Bob Yukich led us to an impressive 65 different species on our April 2008 walk.

We thank [Birds and Beans](#) coffee shop in Mimico who continue to sponsor all of the walks. It is initiatives like the shade grown coffee they sell that helps ensure we have migrating songbirds coming back each spring!

Mimico 20/20

The City of Toronto Planning Department has begun a process called Mimico By-The-Lake Revitalization Initiative, or "Mimico 20/20". They recognise that the planning rules for the the Mimico-By-The-Lake area are out of date and in need of revision. They have sought community input to establish a vision for the area and identify priorities. This was done through a well-attended community workshop last June and a follow-up meeting in February of this year. They should be issuing a report later this year identifying how they intend to move forward with the process.

It is important that this process happens now. Redevelopment is happening all around Mimico, so there should be clear and relevant rules in place before the applications come in. We should have the kind of development the community wants, not just what the developers want.

Along with the obvious concerns about views and access to the lake, we are concerned that Mimico-By-The-Lake is considered in the context of the other development going on around it. Humber Bay Shores is only half built out, 1800 residential units have been approved on Parklawn Road, and

there are other smaller developments planned or being built further to the west. All these new residents will share the same roads, transit, and other services.

You can read much more about this process and its background at <http://ccfew.org/html/development.html>.

Colonel Sam Smith Park Tree Tour

The Toronto Tree Tours – a partnership between award winning organizations Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) and the Toronto Public Space Committee – will be hosting a tree tour with CCFEW, LAMP and local historian Paul Chomik on **Saturday May 31st from 1pm to 3pm starting at the Assembly Hall at 1 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Drive (Kipling and Lakeshore).**



Stroll the grounds of the former Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital (now Humber College) as local historian Paul Chomik vividly recounts stories of the area's rich history. Visit a century-old apple orchard once tended by patients of the asylum as part of their restorative therapy. Meander through protected wetlands that are home to beaver and migrating songbirds and be enveloped in the peaceful calm of a grove of black walnut trees. As we make our way through the lakeshore grounds, along the waterfront, and into the surrounding residential area, learn about the efforts of local community groups to maintain the natural wonder of the park and improve the struggling street trees along busy Lakeshore Boulevard. Space is limited so pre-registration is suggested. Please register online at www.treetours.to/node/147.

For more information contact: Susan Guley, Tree Tours Coordinator, 416-413-9244, susan@leaftoronto.org

Visit www.treetours.to to learn more about this and other tree tours across the city.

Website Update

Back in the fall of 2005, we launched our website, ccfew.org, as an experiment. We didn't know if it would be worthwhile. Would anyone see it? Would it be too much work? Wasted time and money?

The site has grown slowly and steadily, and so has its audience. More than twice as many people now visit the site each week as will receive this newsletter. The price is right too: the annual cost of maintaining the website is about the same as printing and mailing one newsletter. Some of our members are not using the internet or e-mail, so we are still committed to at least one newsletter per year, but it is no longer the primary means of communication it once was. The website, combined with e-mail, allows us to communicate more quickly, effectively and economically with our members and the broader community than ever before.

We also have to keep in mind that to a growing portion of the population, if you don't exist on Google, you don't exist.

E-Mail Updates

There is more information on everything in this newsletter on our website. If you are not already receiving notices of events and meetings, send an e-mail to: subscribe@ccfew.org, and we'll put you on our list.

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CCFEW Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 13th, 7:00 pm
at the Mimico Centennial Library,
47 Station Road
(see page 1 for more details)



Join us for a

Garlic Mustard Pull

Wednesday, May 21
Colonel Samuel Smith Park
Meet in the south parking lot at 7:00 pm

CCFEW Bird Walks



Saturday, May 24th
Saturday, June 21st

9:00 am to 11:00 am
rain or shine

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



friends of sam smith park Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 6, 7:00 pm
The Assembly Hall, 1 Col Sam Smith Park Dr.
Guest Speaker: Connie Pinto, TRCA

Toronto Tree Tours

at Sam Smith Park
Saturday, May 31
(see page 5 for details)



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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