

## **Glebe Community Association Report on 2004-05 Activities June 7, 2005**

This annual report is presented to the members of the Glebe Community Association (GCA) at the June 7, 2005 Annual General Meeting. It presents the highlights of our activities for the year 2004-05.

### **Glebe Community Centre**

The highlight of the year was the opening of the renovated Glebe Community Centre on October 2, 2004. The opening celebration, organized by the City and the Glebe Neighbourhood Activities Group (GNAG) with the support of the GCA, attracted thousands of delighted residents. The GCA worked with the Glebe Historical Society to present displays on the history of the Glebe. Of special interest was a video showing the massive march to save the community centre when it was threatened with closure. This reminded us all of the enormous decade-long community effort to get the Centre renovated and how GNAG, the Renovation Working Group and the GCA all worked long and hard to persuade the City to fund the project.

The official opening also saw the re-naming of the main hall as Scotton Hall, in honour of former GCA president, board member and community activist, Eileen Scotton.

Since its opening, the Community Centre is buzzing with more activities than ever and City staff, GNAG, the Glebe Report, the Glebe Co-operative Pre-School, the Pantry and other groups make use of every square inch of the great new space. The GCA, meanwhile, continues to work with neighbours to remedy minor problems relating to the Centre's noisy air conditioners and boiler system.

### **Great Glebe Garage Sale and other Events**

This was the 20<sup>th</sup> year for the Glebe Community Association's annual event: Great Glebe Garage Sale. Once again, it was a tremendous success that got everyone out and about meeting their neighbours, selling and buying goods and generally building community spirit. The GCA organizes this event to benefit the Food Bank. As of June 6, 2005, the Food Bank had received XX????

The Great Glebe Garage Sale is now so renowned that it is attracting national as well as local media attention. In response to City concerns that congested streets might prevent emergency vehicles getting through, the GCA worked with the City to designate no-parking emergency routes and the provision of free parking at Lansdowne. At the request of the GCA, three public schools (Corpus Christi, First Avenue, and Mutchmor) offered parking in their schoolyards. These initiatives helped calm the streets and create a safer community event for all.

The GCA is working on a new fall event for 2005: "Walk till you Shop"—an event being organized as part of Car-Free Day in cooperation with the Glebe Business Group.

We also provided a small financial grant to "Art in the Park" an artist-led, family-friendly outdoor art festival held in Central Park that promotes the cultural life of our community.

### **Heritage**

The GCA's heritage committee continued to work with the City on the possible designation of Central Park East as a heritage conservation district. Volunteers completed research on over 60 houses east of Bank Street around Glebe and Clemow, including several residences designed by prominent Ottawa architect W.E. Noffke. A public meeting on the project was held on December 1, 2004 and a joint GCA-City committee created to evaluate each of the properties for heritage significance. It is expected that the study will be completed in late 2005.

The GCA received a Heritage Project grant of \$2000 from the City of Ottawa to arrange and organize its records, with the intention of donating them to the City of Ottawa Archives. A researcher has been hired and the project is underway, under the supervision of a GCA archives committee.

The GCA heritage committee is closely linked to the Glebe Historical Society and the two groups cooperate on projects. For Doors Open at the Glebe Community Centre, GCA board members wrote a historical description while Historical Society volunteers gave tours.

### **Environment**

The main initiative of the Environment Committee was to revive the community planter maintenance program and coordinate a new group of "garden angels" to look after the planter boxes. Thanks go to Loblaws on Pretoria for its donation of 40 flats of annuals to help with this neighbourhood beautification project.

The Committee also continues to sell energy-reducing compact florescent bulbs and to publish enviro-tips in the Glebe Report.

The GCA was the recipient of a City of Ottawa 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative tree. Our sugar maple was planted in late May at the Community Centre.

### **Business**

The GCA and the Glebe Business Group worked closely together on many shared issues from Bank Street reconstruction (see more below) to fall festivals. The GCA supported the Glebe Business Group on a request to City Council to allow free Saturday parking in the Glebe so that our neighbourhood we have consistent treatment with our 'main street' shopping districts in the city (Bank Street north, Elgin, Westboro, New Edinburgh, Vanier, Old Ottawa South etc.).

This request was not approved by Council however fines at the City parking lot behind Loeb Glebe were reduced.

The GCA and the Glebe Business Group have also requested more control over the number and location of newspaper boxes. This issue is still pending.

### **Sunnyside Library**

In the aftermath of the successful fight to save Sunnyside Library from closure, board members from the GCA and from the Old Ottawa South Community Association vowed to continue work to protect and strengthen this important community institution. Community members monitor the Ottawa Public Library Board meetings. An OSCA-GCA used book sale in October 2004 raised \$9000 for Sunnyside Library Renovations.

Recognizing that our interest in supporting Sunnyside will be a long term project, a new group "Friends of the Sunnyside Library, with representation from the boards of both OSCA and GCA was established in the spring of 2005 (February 2005 by OSCA, May 2005 by GCA). The Friends have created and are selling Sunnyside book bags, a fundraiser expected to raise another \$5000. The group is also working on another used book sale, planned for October 2005.

### **Lansdowne**

Despite the Grey Cup being held at Lansdowne Park this year, there was little GCA activity related to the site until late May 2005 when we found out of a proposal to move the giant videotron sign from the east end of the park to the west end, where it would inconvenience drivers and residents. This proposal is being opposed by the GCA.

### **Planning**

The neighbourhood planning committee monitored dozens of requests for variances, severances, cash-in-lieu of parking and zoning changes this year.

Around the time of our last annual meeting the issues that were in the air were expansion of the Palisades retirement facility, a proposed extension on an engineering office on Pretoria, redevelopment plans for a house at Bronson and Findlay, an infill project on Second, expansion of a group home on Glebe and the sudden appearance of temporary offices along the Holmwood side of Lansdowne Park. On two of these cases we ended up appearing before the Ontario Municipal Board in support of an appellant. In one circumstance we took no position but neighbours went to the OMB.

Then plans came out for new homes on Pretoria, a welcome development but one which posed problems for the School of Speech and Drama. Over the winter we joined with neighbours in questioning plans for expansion on Linden Terrace and a front yard extension of a home on Second Avenue.

The greatest single focus of attention was the block of Bank Street between Holmwood and Wilton. Even as construction of the new addition to the Glebe Centre came to an end, the financial failure of the life-lease project brought great uncertainty to the future uses of the 13 storey tower at Bank and Holmwood. The tower has now been sold and the GCA is monitoring the various applications related to the redevelopment of this site.

Next door to the Glebe Centre, at the former Villa Deli site, Montreal firm Ecocité launched a condominium project. Public consultations on the project showed that this development was supported and indeed welcomed by the community and there were not objections or concerns raised. It is very encouraging to see the arrival of developments that support the goal of intensification in a manner sensitive to community needs.

Reconstruction of several roads in the Glebe had planning implications as it was revealed that a large number of residents have illegal front-yard parking spots. After some debate, the Association decided to support the requests of residents to have their existing spots legalized if they had been created before the new official plan. However, the GCA does not support front-yard parking in general.

The GCA also continues to participate in the Federation of Citizens' Associations. In fact, the GCA rep to the Association is now President of the FCA. Through the FCA, the GCA participated in many important city wide initiatives such as commenting on ward boundaries and development charges. We also organized and participated in a number of seminars and workshops.

## **Traffic**

Arguably the most active committee this year was the Traffic Committee. A major milestone was achieved with City Council's approval of most of the Glebe Traffic Plan. However, one aspect of the plan—the proposed prohibition of right-hand turns off Bronson during the morning peak rush hour—was deferred to allow further consultation with communities to the south. This consultation is scheduled for June and it is expected that the issue will be re-visited by Council in fall 2005.

Another important success was the Traffic Committee's work to get the Province to recognize the need for sound barriers on the 417 between Lyon and Metcalfe. After public consultation and liaison with members of the Centretown Citizens' Community Association, Councillors and our MPP, Richard Patten, this recommendation has been accepted by the Province. It is not yet known when Sound barriers will be implemented.

As per the Glebe Traffic Plan's recommendations, whenever street reconstruction takes place in the Glebe, efforts are made to calm traffic and improve the streetscape. This year, the Traffic Committee worked on projects relating to Fifth, Strathcona, Patterson, Allen Place and Cobalt. In all cases, the projects involved informal walkabouts with staff and neighbours, and committee

meetings as well as formal public consultations. The results have been positive. In most cases, there will be wider sidewalks, more curb extensions (bulb-outs), and increased numbers of trees and green spaces.

A corner of particular concern was the Monkland-O'Connor intersection where parked cars were blocking the visibility of cars exiting Monkland. The GCA supported residents in trying to improve the situation and, as a result, a new stop sign was installed. It is hoped that a new curb extension will also be built.

Much work was also carried out on the reconfiguration of the Carling-Bronson intersection to make this intersection (one of the most congested and dangerous in the city) safer and more efficient. Consultations and planning meetings were held involving neighbours and Glebe Collegiate School Council. At the time of writing, the final plans have not been revealed but the high level of cooperation from city staff creates a sense of confidence that the final plan will address community concerns.

### **Bank Street Reconstruction**

The biggest new project of the year 2004-05 was the beginning of planning for the reconstruction of Bank Street. So far our work has involved inviting groups from Old Ottawa South and Westboro to share their reconstruction experiences, a community brainstorming/design charette the naming of four board members (2 community, 2 business) to sit on the City's public advisory committee and the creation of a new Bank Street Working Group. We are working closely with the Glebe Business Group and with City Staff on all aspects of the project. One of the most difficult issues is that of the burial of hydro wires. The community and business have expressed a strong desire for this measure, but at present, there is no progress on the issue. We plan to take action to pursue this agenda.

The Bank Street Working Group is our largest committee (nearly 20 strong) and has conducted a series of walkabouts to analyze opportunities and issues. It has also begun research on topics such as lighting, roadwidths, streetscaping etc. It prepared a set of principles and priorities for Bank Street reconstruction which were adopted by the GCA.

### **Membership**

A disappointing and late membership drive for 2003-2004 reduced our number of members to below the 3000 mark. This caused some reflection on how to run a better membership drive. Many improvements were made this year including recruiting of more area reps, on-line payment, streamlined campaign materials and a wine and cheese campaign launch for our over 200 block reps. These measures appear to have been effective and at the time of writing, the 2004-05 campaign is in full swing with positive results.

### **Fire Relief Funds**

The GCA organized fire relief efforts to support those affected by two fires: a Christmas fire at a small Fifth Avenue apartment building and a Centretown fire affecting families attending Glashan school. Our new on-line payment capabilities helped raise nearly \$2000 for the Glebe Fire and \$376 for the Centretown tragedy.

**Administration**

The Board of Directors took steps to better manage its affairs. By joining Volunteer Canada, it was able to apply for insurance at a cost much reduced from previous insurance costs or present-day quotes. The board also passed a motion to amend its general by-laws and bring them up to date. Through its communications director, the GCA has steadily increased its on-line content, on-line membership capabilities, its use of electronic distribution lists and on-line payments.

Respectfully submitted,

June Creelman  
President