



President's report to the Annual General Meeting, June 12, 2007

As the term of the GCA board for 2006-2007 comes to a close, it is appropriate to look back at our achievements and to anticipate future challenges.

In the midst of summer 2006 we had an innovation in the Glebe. Bank Street was closed for a celebration of survival from cancer. **"Dancing in the Streets"** drew crowds to our community for a day of entertainment. The GCA supported the event through providing volunteers to staff the traffic barriers and by informing residents of traffic diversions and similar arrangements.

Summer was also a time for our band of green-thumbed activists, operating under the title **"Garden Angels"** who tended to flower boxes along the street. The GCA acted as a conduit to provide financing for the gardening initiatives of that group of volunteers.

And some GCA representatives were engaged in summertime debates about ways in which relief could be provided to the residents of **Findlay, Broadway and Torrington** who suffered from excessive traffic every weekday morning. This was the one part of the Glebe Traffic Plan which Council had not accepted, and proposed solutions had caused concern in the neighbouring community of Ottawa South. An innovative half-measure (banning right-turns from Torrington onto the Driveway) was devised and our neighbours supported our efforts. Nevertheless this half-measure encountered opposition in Council and only through effective manoeuvring by our Councillor and after several months of delay, was the ban approved. It is not certain that we have achieved our objective of reducing traffic pressure in that part of the community – we are awaiting results from city surveys of traffic on the streets affected.

It was in summer too that the GCA, jointly with the Glebe Business Group, assumed responsibility for Bank Street under the city's **"adopt a street"** program. It has been as part of our commitment to that program that we have assembled volunteers to clean up the street after special events and as part of the spring cleaning project of the city.

As we moved into the autumn, city-wide developments and their impact on our community became increasingly the GCA focus. We held a consultation meeting on the draft comprehensive **zoning by-law** to provide residents with an insight into this complex subject. On the basis of that consultation and their own study of the voluminous document, the Neighbourhood Planning Committee prepared a detailed brief which was submitted to the city. Several of those recommendations have been reiterated this June as a second draft of the by-law has been presented for comment.

We will need to follow zoning issues closely. From the standpoint of city staff, the current exercise is seen as a simple consolidation of old by-laws from the prior municipalities. Accordingly

there is a reluctance to look at new approaches. But it is not clear that in the near term there will be further opportunity to have changes incorporated in the city's zoning regulations.

One aspect of land use which attracted much debate both last and this year is the phenomenon of "**a house behind a house**" development. As the process of urban intensification continues in the Glebe, this form of development becomes financially attractive. Community acceptance of such a development pattern seems to be dependent on the specific site and design features. However there appears to be resistance to such developments when approval is secured under one use category (such as a duplex) while the apparent intent is another category (such as detached house). Neighbours appealed such a development to the Ontario Municipal Board and the GCA registered as an interested party in that hearing. As a result of the GCA interest in the issue, Council adopted changes to the zoning by-law of the old city of Ottawa to prevent such an interpretation of the term "duplex".

Of course the city-wide event that we all remember from the autumn was the municipal election. In accordance with our well-established practice, we encouraged citizens to become informed about the issues and the candidates while remaining neutral as an association. We joined with partner associations in organizing an **all-candidates meeting** at Immaculata High School at which candidates for Mayor and for Capital Ward Councillor appeared. Subsequently we held our own all-candidates meeting featuring the Councillor candidates.

One issue which came to predominate in the election campaign was the proposed **light rail** project. Our association had gone on record as supporting the project, largely in the expectation that it would reduce, or at least slow the growth of, vehicular traffic through our community.

City budgets were also a major topic of discussion in the election. Among other things, budget pressures led to a delay in the **reconstruction of Bank Street** in the Glebe. Digging is not expected to be seen until 2009. But the GCA Bank Street committee continues to follow the project as it is elaborated by the city and our association maintains its resolve that the wires along Bank Street should be buried as part of reconstruction.

As a way of raising awareness about the issue of burying the wires and as a way of raising resources for that purpose, we have joined with local business in the **Underground Sound** series of concerts. The concerts have succeeded in both objectives – informing others and raising funding – and have brought talented artists to perform in our community.

But we had hoped that a **city policy** on designated streets would emerge which would indicate that the wires and poles should disappear from Bank Street. An initial paper on street design has appeared but movement toward a policy is very slow and hesitant. We have commented on the initial paper and now must find ways to hasten the process. Otherwise the detailed design for Bank Street may proceed without provision for burying the wires. Another opportunity to bring Bank Street up to the standard of normal Canadian towns and cities will not come along for a generation.

At the north of the community, the provincial government is planning to do work on the **Queensway**. The GCA Traffic Committee has been active in pushing for appropriate sound barriers along the Glebe portion of the highway. The association has formally requested further work on the environmental assessment of the Queensway project. We believe that planning for the Queensway, such as a new interchange orientation at Bronson, has failed to fully take into account traffic plans of the City and the Glebe Traffic Plan. We have flagged to the Minister safety issues for youngsters crossing Chamberlain on their way to school.

This year the GCA has been particularly active in addressing **environmental** issues. It was proposed in the autumn that the association declare the neighbourhood free of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. The board's view was that we should first make sure that residents were aware of alternative approaches and then consider making such a declaration.

As an educational initiative, the **Envirofair** was held in late March. This one-day event informed visitors of alternatives to use of pesticides and of other ways an individual can reduce his/her "environmental footprint". The fair was an outstanding success with good participation by local businesses and an excellent turnout of visitors.

Following on the success of the Envirofair, the GCA Board adopted a resolution declaring the Glebe a **pesticide-free neighbourhood**. It is hoped that the declaration will encourage property owners both in the Glebe and elsewhere in the urban area to avoid pesticide application and search out alternatives. Some other Ottawa communities are considering following our lead; together we may stimulate City Council to adopt measures to control the application of pesticides in Ottawa.

The GCA has made application to the city for support for a **tree inventory** project. The inventory approach called "Neighbourwoods" has been applied in Europe and in some communities in southwestern Ontario. Volunteers will be trained in June to conduct the inventory over the summer and early autumn.

A subcommittee was established in the winter to consider the problem of **graffiti** in the Glebe. The initial activity has been to document the problem and provide the city with detailed information on specific instances of graffiti on public property. As recommended by the subcommittee, the GCA spoke out in support of the city's Graffiti Management Strategy while flagging our concern that recognition be made of the cost of graffiti for small business.

We have had to make changes in our **communication** with the community over the past year. Stories about GCA activity continue to appear in the Glebe Report, which is our principal vehicle for reaching our members and others in the neighbourhood. Our web presence through Glebeonline has ended because that site has become dormant. We have launched our own site and slowly it is gaining readers.

Loss of the valued support from Glebeonline has also affected some of our **membership** record operations. As we rebuild our capability in that area we should look for ways to become more

responsive to members' interests and concerns. Our current membership campaign is wrapping up at the time of this meeting.

Then there is the **Great Glebe Garage Sale**, probably the event for which we best known. This year we tried to emphasize to contribution to the Food Bank, the reason for the sale. Our arrangements with the city for the Garage Sale became more complex this year and efforts will be needed to resolve those issues centred around liability and insurance.

We have tried to deepen our collaboration with the Glebe **business** community over the year. Not only are we partners in Underground Sound and in caring for Bank Street, we also have provided support as appropriate for the establishment of a Business Improvement Area in the Glebe.

In a parallel fashion we have encouraged the **farmers' market** at Lansdowne Park. Eventually we see this developing into a commercial operation that will attract visitors to our neighbourhood from elsewhere in the city.

Although these are some of the highlights of the past year, there are also many **ongoing activities** which should also be noted. For example the Neighbourhood Planning Committee receives a constant flow of variance applications and site plan approval notices. Meetings are regularly arranged at which developers can explain their projects and neighbours can express their views. The Planning Committee is also involved in meetings with city officials to see if our request for a Community Design Plan can be brought forward for the 2008 City Budget. Similarly the Heritage Committee is trying to advance the heritage designation of eastern Central Park which is moving slowly toward approval.

But what does the **future** hold for the Glebe Community Association? Some of the demands we will face are known. We will have to be involved in the details of the reconstruction of Bank Street, not just what is built but also how we cope with the period of construction. We will need to organize for all-candidates meetings for the provincial election. But there are also potential surprises which may crop up. One example is the recent accident at Fifth and O'Connor – we will need to consider if some change is needed for community safety. Another example is collapse of talks to restart professional football at Lansdowne – editorials have started to appear asking about the future of the park and our community has a vital interest in what is decided.

All of these activities have been made possible by **volunteers**. We are very fortunate in the Glebe. Not only did we inherit a community that is beautiful and walkable, we also have a population with diverse talents. Best of all, many of those talented people are willing to step forward to improve their community. Without those volunteers cleaning up the street, offering up ideas at meetings, knocking on doors, planting bulbs, or wading through thick documents, our community would be poorer. Whatever you did over the past year, your community thanks you.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Brocklebank