



NEWS RELEASE

Neighbourhood Groups Forced to Back Down on Lansdowne Appeal *OMB appeal costs "stack the deck against community associations"*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2011, Ottawa—The Glebe Community Association (GCA) and the Old Ottawa South Community Association (OSCA) announced today that they have negotiated changes to the Lansdowne Park development with the City of Ottawa that will help reduce some of the negative impacts of the development on their respective communities. However, the changes agreed to by the City are conditional on the associations dropping their appeal of the zoning to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

Both neighbourhood associations continue to harbour profound reservations about the impact of the redevelopment on their communities, particularly with regards to traffic congestion, parking and commercial development on Bank Street. But they reluctantly agreed to drop their appeal in exchange for zoning modifications and some specific changes to the design and layout of buildings on the site, after being advised by lawyers that these compromises were the best they could hope for in negotiations.

The modest concessions from the City include reductions in the height of four key buildings, hard limits on the number of residential units, and a guarantee that a small public space will remain in the area of Bank and Holmwood. The associations also negotiated an expanded involvement for themselves in future talks on traffic, transit and park planning and remediation, as well as stronger protection for the development area known to planners as the urban park.

"These changes do address some issues that were of concern to the community," said OSCA board member Brendan McCoy, who was closely involved in the negotiations. But McCoy emphasized that the prohibitive cost of proceeding with an appeal before the OMB, and the risk of a far worse outcome if the appeal failed, were the major factors in the association's difficult decision to settle.

The OSCA board viewed the situation as akin to a hostage-taking, said McCoy, with residents in the Bank Street and Holmwood Avenue area as the hostages. "We were really in this to protect neighbours living in the immediate area, and according to the legal advice we received, the deal wasn't going to get any better than this. We're still tremendously unsatisfied, but we're convinced the outcome for these residents could have been far worse had we continued—and lost—the fight."

McCoy said the OMB appeal process can be expensive, difficult and unpredictable. "The costs stack the deck against community associations," he said.

Opposition to the project and frustration with the city remain deep and widespread in both neighbourhoods, noted Bob Brocklebank, who was involved in the negotiations for the GCA. "We are still asking the mayor and council to take a hard look at the cost and wisdom of this poorly conceived development that will damage local communities and burden the city with heavy debt loads for decades to come."

The neighbourhood associations' agreement with the city is not connected in any way with the ongoing legal case against the city by the Friends of Lansdowne, an organization that is actively supported by many Glebe and Old Ottawa South residents.