

Approved condo betrays Don Mills community

LETTERS

Re: "Don Mills condo project gets council nod on second try" (March 2010).

City council's approval of Cadillac Fairview's condominium towers is the ultimate betrayal of the Don Mills community.

It is disturbing that the majority of city councillors, many of whom gave passionate speeches against the phase two application when it was first tabled in October, now supported it, although it had barely changed. Kudos to councillors Del Grande, Ford, and Minnan-Wong for standing up for Don Mills by voting against it.

It is even more disturbing that the local ratepayers' group, Don Mills Residents Inc., aggressively supported a development that will forever change the nature of Don Mills.

As a residents' group, one would expect them to work for their community, instead of aligning themselves with

a developer.

It is curious that Don Mills Residents Inc. president Terry West offers a membership count ("about 10 of them") for Don Mills Friends (which has never had a formal membership system), while claiming that the majority of Don Mills residents support his group's approach, which has never been substantiated by any credible public poll of residents.

Don Mills Friends was formed in 2006 to represent a 5,000-signature petition to retain an indoor mall and has since then continued to be the voice of all those in the community who disagree with the Don Mills Residents Inc.'s developer-friendly stance.

We never intended to compete with that group or take its place. We simply did what we think Don Mills Residents Inc. should have done but didn't.

As West knows, several of his members have been active supporters of

Don Mills Friends; some even terminated their Don Mills Residents Inc. membership in protest over its tactics.

If we thought we were representing a mere 10 people, we would never have put in so much time and effort over the past four years to defend the community.

There are, in fact, many Don Mills residents who disagree with this development, but have been told by the Don Mills Residents Inc. that there was no alternative because the Ontario Municipal Board would approve the application anyway. This is not necessarily so.

In applications that involve Official Plan amendments and rezoning bylaw changes, the voice of the residents carries considerably more weight than it does for simple site plan applications (such as phase one).

If the Don Mills Residents Inc. had applied their considerable energies and persuasion skills to fight the

application, we had a good chance of winning at the Ontario Municipal Board.

Cadillac Fairview was well aware of this, which is why they tried so hard to achieve a settlement.

*Simone Gabbay
Founder, Don Mills
Friends*

Passionate about preserving planned community

Members of Don Mills Friends may be very vocal, it is only because they are and have been passionate about preventing the destruction of North America's first planned community.

Unfortunately, because both the city and Don Mills Residents Inc. approved Cadillac Fairview's plan thus making it a fait accompli, Don Mills is now about to lose its uniqueness and become just another high rise area of Toronto.

*Mary Jane Mills
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