

Public deceived in Don Mills change

While the residents were grateful to be able to voice their opinions at a public meeting April 13, (judging by the largest turnout ever), it is high time they are also given the same advantages developers have enjoyed with city staff and councillors alike.

The city is co-operating with the developer by processing a site plan, considerably changed since it was shown to the public in 2004, while the official plan and zoning bylaw amendment applications for the same site are pending. This is a deception of the public as well as the city and should not be tolerated.

Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion would have sent the site plan immediately back to the drawing board.

The city seems to be proceeding without realizing that a community centre be built prior to the re-development of the retail. At the very least, the proper space and location for a community centre must be settled in the first phase. To count only on the space of the current ice rink and in Phase 2, as suggested by Ward 34 Councillor Miriam-Wong (Don Valley East) is too little too late. If any residential buildings are to be built, then the appropriate park space required by the official plans and planning act must be provided in Phase 1, now.

The fact that with the exception of one conscientious planner, no urban designer, urban forester, parks and recreation persons nor the roads and public works department from the city has bothered to come and ask what residents need or want, shows it's also in favour of the developers.

The fact the city has embarked on the removal of the last recreation facility – the hockey rink – to replace it some four kilometres out of town, again aids the developers. Did residents in Flemington Park have to wait 25 years for a community centre, pool and arena they walk four kilometres to use it?

Over the past three decades the city permitted the construction of more than 2,000 new residential units in Don Mills without

replenishing parks, recreation or other civic facilities. New developers wish to add another 1,200 units without a neighbourhood park? With their back against the wall, is it a wonder that residents are insisting on park and recreation facilities? This should be a green community with gardens not a concrete jungle.

It is the city, assisted by its residents, who must take the lead and create an urban design plan for the centre; after all, using the centre for more than 50 years we have earned 'squatters' rights. As the civic focus, the core area must again include education, social and cultural facilities.

Karl Frank

Money still talks

I am a resident of East York, but for the past 14 years have had a business in Don Mills so I am concerned about the happenings at our local mall.

The demise of the Don Mills Centre will have an enormous impact not only on the residents of Don Mills, but the students, shopkeepers, tradespeople and business people who go there to shop, eat, meet and walk. At the meeting held at the Inn on the Park to discuss the plans Cadillac Fairview has for this area, we were told it will be an outdoor mall with streets and landscaping that will enhance the neighbourhood.

This is Canada. We have cold winters and hot summers and like to be indoors, away from the elements as much as possible. Winter is money. Mill shopkeepers like that dirty money come from our boots in their new upscale shops? I think not. True, the 15- to 20-year-olds are the biggest spenders while the demographics in Don Mills show an aging population.

Cadillac Fairview has made up its mind and we will just have to face the fact that money does talk. It says bye-bye to a great neighbourhood institution. We will truly miss it.

Bill O'Donnell