Parliament Oak property development revealed

Penny Coles
The Local

For about five years now, Old Town residents have been wondering about, and concerned by development on the iconic historic property of the former Parliament Oak school on King Street.

Last week Liberty Sites Ltd., a Montreal company known for developing suburban business parks, unveiled its plans for Parliament Oak Residences, with a dozen semi-detached units of 1.5-storey semi-detached homes, plus a three-storey apartment building.

The apartment building will face King Street, set back as the former school was, and will incorporate some original components of the school. The mature trees on the property are also intended to be preserved, the release outlining the project explains.

Although there has been some consultation with neighbours to the property, which is bordered by King, Gage, Centre and Regent Streets, there have been no public meetings to date about the project.

The redevelopment of the property, the announcement says, "will pursue a garden-like approach predicated on the development team’s commitment to the preservation of trees on the property."

The goal of the project, according to Liberty Sites’ Ralph Levy, "is to create a new generation of residences which exceed all expectations in terms of quality, design, features, and amenities."

He adds that to do so successfully "requires both an appreciation for the historic character of the surrounding neighbourhood, and an appropriate vision for the neighbourhood’s future. And it requires both local insight, and international talent."

Former Niagara-on-the-Lake planning director Stephen Bedford, representing the developer, spoke to The Local about "the grand project, which he’s been involved in from its early days."

He says developer Ralph Levy “saw the site, loved the site and wanted to build something that would fit in the neighbourhood, respecting the school and the historic significance of the property, and paying special attention to the transition from new to old, after studying home designs in the Old Town."

The semi-detached units are designed to look like singles, “reflecting the design you’d find in the Old Town,” says Bedford. Portions of the first floor of the school, including the steps and most of the entranceway, will be preserved, the release explains.

The front yard will look like the front yard of the Penny Coles
The Local

A rewarding volunteer initiative is flourishing in Niagara-on-the-Lake, providing fresh produce for the needy of the community.

Three years ago, the town’s Communities in Bloom Committee took over a small square of garden tucked away behind the NOTL Public Library.

Members of the committee, and others interested in gardening, plant, tend and harvest a range of produce to be shared locally, chiefly with farm workers and Newark Neighbours’ food bank, says Vicky Downes, chair of the Communities in Bloom Committee.

In 2019, in its first sea-
Ming Jiang goes out for a walk through the Cannery Park neighbourhood of St. Davids every day, and often stops to chat with her neighbours.

That’s how she came to be friends with Esther Marcos, and she knows now how lucky she is to have such a good friend.

Last week, Jiang and her husband realized they had a problem with drainage from their backyard into the yard that backs on to theirs. 

The homeowner had done some planting, and dirt piled up along the fence was stopping water from draining as it was supposed to Jiang’s husband said he could fix the issue, and she made arrangements with the homeowner to enter her backyard for a short time. Since the neighbour has an aggressive dog that is often in the backyard, “I asked her if she would keep her dog in the house while my husband was there working.”

When he was finished, she knocked on her neighbour’s door to let her know, and took her some fresh mangoes as a way of saying thank you for agreeing to let him complete the work, she says.

But when she knocked, the dog began furiously scratching the inside of the door. “It was trying to escape, and I was very nervous. I felt I needed to escape.”

When the door was opened, the dog sprang at her, viciously attacking her. “Questions, and more questions, so many questions,” says Esther. “I just wanted them to hurry up and get here.”

Another woman walking by also called 911, and the paramedics arrived, as did the police and humane society officers, who went to talk to the dog owner, who has since brought flowers and apologized to Jiang.

Esther says she’s been told the dog is a rescue dog, a rotweiler, and is known in the neighbourhood for being aggressive.

Jiang has several stitches under her arm — she’s not sure how many — and has been told there is nerve damage that will probably improve.

Her left hand is badly bruised and swollen, and her right hand has a couple of stitches, as does her right calf — six, she thinks.

Although she’s in pain, she can deal with that, she says. However, she keeps re-playing what happened in her head, and the fear of the dog isn’t going away. She keeps asking herself why the neighbour didn’t put her dog in the backyard before answering the door, and Jiang says she will always be nervous when she is out walking and hears it barking — she can hear that it’s still there, she says.

She wanted to tell her story to The Local for two reasons — to warn others in the neighbourhood about the dog, and to especially watch for her in the Cannery Park neighbourhood. 

Police believe he was hit by a vehicle the evening before. As a result of the investigation, the driver, a 54-year-old man from Niagara-on-the-Lake, has been charged with failure to report an accident. 

Ming Jiang, with Esther Marcos and paramedics, was taken to hospital after being attacked by a dog in her Cannery Park neighbourhood last Thursday. (Photo supplied)
school,” he adds, with a “generous” side yard between Gage and Centre Streets, a small parkette on Regent Street, and walkways that connect Regent to Centre, Gage and King Streets.

The landscaping onsite will remain unchanged, with the addition of an interpretive heritage walk and sitting areas along the front, and plaques to explain the heritage of the property and the school. The trees along King Street, including one large oak, will also remain, he says.

A zoning change from institutional to residential is necessary, as is an amendment to allow for the medium density of the apartment building.

The application and requested amendments encompass the whole block as one project, says Bedford.

During a virtual discussion with neighbours, a proposal similar to the current application was presented, and there were lots of questions, along with a reaction that made those involved feel confident they were going forward in the right direction, Bedford says.

He expects there will be further questions about the apartment, but he believes it meets all of the urban design requirements in the town’s Official Plan.

There have been no public meetings to judge the community response to the project, but objections about the size, density and design have been made on social media.

An open house will be held July 6 at 5 p.m., says Bedford, a public meeting is scheduled for Sept. 13, and the application will be going to the Municipal Heritage Committee and the Urban Design Committee for comment. “If all goes well, we’ll have the approval from council before Christmas, with more design details to come in 2022.”

‘Treat having fresh produce’

ed right up until October. “Everything in the garden is doing superbly well,” she says. “It’s a wonderful community project.”

The garden has been supported from the beginning by Ravine Estate Vineyard Winery with cash donations, and by Seaway Gardens, which provides many of the vegetable plants for the garden, she adds.

At the moment, Newark Neighbours is receiving donations of spinach, kale, Swiss chard, herbs and rhubarb. Soon there will be zucchini, “tons of peppers,” tomatoes, garlic and green onions, and a little later, carrots, beets, squash and potatoes, among other vegetables.

Newark food bank manager Cindy Grant says clients very much appreciate the wonderful variety of produce from the community garden. “It is such a treat to be able to offer fresh veggies and herbs to them on a regular basis.”

As much as Newark Neighbours loves having fresh produce to distribute, says Downes, the volunteers love the work they’re doing to provide it.

The amount of produce the garden generates depends on Mother Nature, she adds, “and whatever she gives us, we’ll take.”

This 2 bedroom bungalow townhouse with a finished lower level is enhanced by the lush landscaping and tranquil backyard. The main floor with 12 Foot vaulted ceilings features an open concept Kitchen, Dining and Great Room and the pride of ownership can be admired throughout.

Learn more at nancybailey.evrealestate.com
notlocal.com

Lord Mayor Betty Disero celebrates her second shot in the arm, administered at Simpson’s Apothecary Sunday. Public health is expecting a lot of vaccine to arrive in Niagara over the next two weeks, and new clinics with more appointments will be announced, allowing for more first and second doses to be administered to all who are eligible. (David Gilchrist)

June 23, 2021

Hirji almost ready to lift Niagara dining restrictions

Penny Coles
The Local

Dr. Mustafa Hirji wasn’t quite ready to lift restrictions specific to dining in Niagara early this week, but he says he’s getting closer to making that decision.

The acting chief medical officer of health has been very politely asked by two federal Niagara politicians to drop his Section 22 orders, which limit diners in outdoor patios to four people of the same household, with some exceptions for those living alone.

Conservative MPs Tony Baldinelli from the Niagara Falls riding, and Dean Allinson from Niagara West, said in a letter to Hirji that “despite seeing a renewed sense of hope across Niagara,” the enforcement of the Section 22 order continues to be met with frustration.

“Phase one of the provincial framework allows for outdoor dining with individuals beyond immediate family members, which not only helps our local restauranteurs, but also begins the process of a return to normalcy, which contributes to improved mental health and emotional well-being,” their letter says. “With a decline in new COVID-19 cases across Niagara, we respectfully ask that you consider lifting the Section 22 restrictions for restaurants here in Niagara.”

Some Niagara regional councillors and mayors have also been outspoken with their belief that it’s time for the local restrictions to be dropped.

Hirji said Monday he is looking specifically at two metrics, the number of COVID cases per 100,000 of the population, and the reproduction rate, which indicates how quickly the virus is spreading.

Although the most recent seven-day average number of new cases as reported Monday was 14.82, Hirji says he’s looking for a trend of under 15 to continue for a few days before lifting the Section 22 order, which further impacts restaurant owners who are already restricted to four patrons at a table and physical distancing requirements set by the province.

He said Monday he would be closely watching what happens over the next few days, and hopefully, if a downward trend continues, Niagara will get to the point where “it would be possible to lift that restriction on dining with only your household.”

The other all-important metric he is watching is the reproduction rate. Anything less than one shows the number of new cases will be declining, as each new case spreads to less than one other person. The reproduction rate was .77 Monday, but that was up from a low of .64 last Friday, and Hirji is waiting for it to fall again, although he said the marginal increase wasn’t “too concerning” to him.

However, he warned, as he has in recent weeks, that the Delta variant, which spreads faster and is thought to cause more serious illness than other variants, could be on the rise in Niagara. It’s becoming the dominant strain in other areas, and could be here as well, he said. Although it still appears to be a small number, representing only four cases in Niagara Monday, the difficulty in screening for it means it could be more prevalent than it appears, he said.

And once that Section 22 order is lifted, there will be more people heading to outdoor patios to socialize with their friends, creating more opportunity for the virus to spread, he warned, asking residents to make the choice for themselves to dine only with household members. He asked again to spread the message that more people get tested if they have even mild symptoms, to allow public health to carry out contact tracing, which, along with having a greater percentage of the population vaccinated, will reduce the number of new cases and allow for the lifting of further restrictions.

Cause to celebrate

Hirji quite ready to lift Niagara dining restrictions

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Cause to celebrate

Lord Mayor Betty Disero celebrates her second shot in the arm, administered at Simpson’s Apothecary Sunday. Public health is expecting a lot of vaccine to arrive in Niagara over the next two weeks, and new clinics with more appointments will be announced, allowing for more first and second doses to be administered to all who are eligible. (David Gilchrist)
Soon after his mother died, his father made a heartfelt request. Alois Schwendinger, a man who left Austria after the Second World War for “temporary” work in Canada, a father, grandfather and cancer survivor, a cabinetmaker with rugged hands and a gentle heart, wanted to die in the same place as his wife, Ruth. His beloved Ruth – the love of his life for almost 60 years and reason he never returned to Austria – was 81 when she died at Hospice Niagara in 2018. And that’s where Alois wanted to go. When it was his time, of course. Alois Schwendinger, Alois’ son was both surprised, and impressed, with his dad’s matter-of-fact approach. “He said, ‘That’s where I want to go when it comes to my time,’ says Glenn. ‘And I said, ‘What do you mean dad? You’re not sick.’ And he said, ‘When the time comes, that’s where I want to go’.” It was just before Christmas 2017 when Ruth was admitted to hospice. “It’s a really tough decision, a really tough day to bring your parent to a facility that you know what’s going to happen,” says Glenn. “It ended up being some of the most special times we had with her.” The weight, the burden, the endless worry of caring for Ruth at home was lifted. “We’ll take care of her,” staff in the residence assured the family. “Your job now is just to love her.” And love her, they did. Ruth died Jan. 15, 2018. In the months that followed, Alois would drop by hospice, sometimes with an offering of chocolates and always kind words. “He wanted to say, thank you. They made such an impression on him when he was going through such a difficult time,” says Glenn. “It was beyond touching.” And then, less than a year later came more devastating news: the prostate cancer Alois thought was gone for good, had returned. It was aggressive and had already spread. Alois wanted to live at home for as long as possible, surrounded by memories of Ruth, and then, as held told his son months before, come to hospice when the time was right. Alois was admitted to hospice one Thursday in February 2020, he was gone, by Monday. His wishes, honoured, he died in the very room in which Ruth had spent her final days, surrounded by his family. “It’s hard to describe, that a place where you lose a loved one has such special memories, but it does,” says Glenn. “Hospice was such a comforting and supportive place to be during such a difficult time.” Hospice Niagara helps people live well from the time of diagnosis with a terminal illness, at end of life and while grieving a death. No one needs to do this alone. We are here to help, no matter what life presents. Call us at 905-984-8766 or info@hospiceniagara.ca
More development headed our way, more battles to fight

It seems this was a week for more news, and of course COVID-related news as well. The number of COVID cases continues to drop, with fewer hospitalizations. There were just nine new cases in Niagara reported Monday, and seven Tuesday. There were 215 active cases in the region Tuesday, and seven in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Section 22 restrictions in Niagara could be lifted soon, which is good news for local restaurants, and diners who will be able to go out with their friends.

The province is moving closer — we are all moving closer — to the next step of recovery. For those anxious to be vaccinated, first or second dose, there should be lots of vaccine on hand, and hopefully enough appointments for all who want them. Life is looking up.

For some of us, the pandemic may have given us a different perspective on other challenges in life, from personal problems to some of the municipal issues we face. The challenges that for the most part have taken a back seat to COVID. We’re learning more now about the new subdivision on John Street East, on historic property, and also on the landmark site of the former Parliament Oak school on King Street. Both properties are significant in NOTL, not just because of their historic or cultural importance, but because they are well-known neighbourhoods that have a place in our heart, and that deserve respect and protection.

There will be meetings, there will be discussions, there will be new stories and editorials and letters to the editor. As the developers will be blamed, the politicians will be blamed, and at some point, something will be built on those properties. Neighbourhoods will change, and change won’t be popular. Such is growth in a beloved, beautiful area. We’ll speak out, we’ll hopefully find some compromise, and lovely new people will move to share the Niagara-on-the-Lake we all love. Small comfort, but development battles have been fought for decades, some successfully, some not. We will fight any battle and for any compromise that will preserve what we love about our town.

And will continue to love, despite the change that can’t be stopped.

Penny Coles
The Local

Editor
Penny Coles
penelope@notllocal.com
905-246-5878
Publisher
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local
Graphic Designer
Rosie Gowswell
composing@notllocal.com
notllocal.com • facebook.com/notllocal • Instagram.com/thenotllocal • @thenotllocal

Advertising Sales:
Karen Skoch
karen@notllocal.com • 905-641-5355
Julia Coles
julia@notllocal.com • 905-934-1940
Helen Arnaudet
Local Business Directory, Local Happenings, Classified Sales
classified@notllocal.com

P.O. Box 430, 1596 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, L0S 1T0

Each Tuesday, The Niagara-on-the-Lake Local invites submissions to Our Voice, which we hope to offer as a regular column. Submissions can be on any topic that would be of interest to NOTL readers, and can be up to 1,000 words. Please email ideas or submissions to penny@notllocal.com.
Deadheading is tedious but necessary.

Marla Percy
Past president, NOTL Horticultural Society

Unless your garden has nothing but shrubs and evergreens, you will inevitably have to confront flowering plants with shrivelled, spent blooms. If you want your garden looking presentable, you will have to deadhead.

Dead head doesn’t refer to your odd nephew, it simply means cutting off spent blossoms to tidy up the appearance of your plants. But appearance isn’t the only reason for deadheading.

By cutting off old blooms, the plant is encouraged to send out new blooms, and often the second blooms are longer-lasting. Without deadheading, the plant thinks it’s time to reproductive dormancy, and encourag new blooms. If your plants are low, get a pad to kneel on so you’re not bent over for long periods.

Deadheading is not difficult, but can be boring. Try to deadhead every couple of days for short periods, rather than one day for hours. Although you can always think of people you don’t like as you’re snipping.

You can get great value from deadheading plants such as phlox, delphiniums, lupines salvia, shasta daisies, yarrow, coneflowers, and of course roses. If you deadhead them before they have wilted, you can enjoy them for a few more days indoors.

Some plants with many small flowers growing together can be sheared, but be careful not to shear so low that you’re shearing new blossoms coming up from beneath.

Summer is short, so this is only a two-month job. Once September comes around, you can let your flowers go to seed and enjoy the seedpods in the lovely autumn months, or collect the seeds for next year.

Visit jointhecommunities.org/garden to check out the Garden of the Week Contest, run by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Communities in Bloom Committee, and submit your garden or garden feature for consideration in one of 10 great categories.

The fifth in a ten-week gardening column series, organized by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Communities in Bloom Committee.

Local LETTERS

Founders of Friends of Fort George want view of Fort Mississauga opened

Having read about the proposed re-design of the entry to Old Town at Queen and Mississauga Streets, we are astounded that consideration is being given to fabricate a 40-foot long x (a partial) 8-foot high stone wall which will obscure the view of Lake Ontario and the 200-year, national historic site - Fort Mississauga. In addition, instead of focusing visitors’ views on the “real” architecture and sites’ “real” history as a designated national historic site, this proposal suggests building a 25-foot obelisk to represent the lighthouse. Our first reaction is “welcome to Disney North.”

Incredible amounts of effort, Canadian pride and money have been invested by the heritage community, the town, Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to recognize and preserve Niagara-on-the-Lake’s history and original buildings. It is beyond belief that consideration is being given to divert attention at this critical location.

While a three-way stop may provide better opportunity for visitors to be directed back to the QE II and reduce traffic toward Byersen Park, it does not require the proposed scale of landscaping and fabricated monument to change the traffic pattern. If it is the intent to allow visitors to park and photograph the wall, we would suggest that this will create a traffic hazard resulting from last-minute pullovers, wandering pedestrians and therefore, even more, unnecessary traffic tie-ups.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Old Town in particular, has an incredible collection of nationally designated historic buildings and sites which tell the story of Canada's history. We have beautiful vistas, restored and well-maintained heritage homes, a designated national historic district, the first museum, Fort George and Fort Mississauga, which were sites of conflict in the War of 1812. We do not need to fabricate sites or obscure existing resources in order to welcome visitors. Perhaps more consideration should be given to directing visitors travelling on Niagara Stone Road to alternate arrival locations, like the Fort George parking lot where the Chamber of Commerce operates a convenient Visitors’ Centre or create an area at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre - both sites having appropriate and safe parking.

We would encourage council to reconsider what the impact of a large, lit-up and fabricated monument would have on this historic community which proudly maintains and presents a heritage ambience.

Erika and Jim Alexander

Back by popular demand

The town’s annual tulip bulb sale was held Tuesday morning at the community centre, with proceeds to benefit the Town Tree Fund. (Dave Gilchrist)
Pumphouse spearheads visual arts collective
July 1 scavenger hunt to raise awareness of NOTL’s vibrant art community

Penny Coles
The Local

Professional visual artists in Niagara-on-the-Lake have taken a huge step toward promoting themselves as a group, forming a partnership that will help them network and support their community.

Lise Andreana, five-year chair of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre, has planted the seed by creating the NOTL Arts Collective, for professional artists and representatives of art galleries and commercial art spaces.

It’s been a long-standing dream of hers, she says, to help promote the local visual art community. It is spearheaded by the Pumphouse, which as a non-profit organization is well-placed “to grow the artistic community, while building strong ties to our cultural partners through collaborative public events.”

To launch this initiative, the Pumphouse is hosting a Canada Day event, with residents and visitors to NOTL invited to participate in an art scavenger hunt, which will lead participants to various artworks and locations throughout town. About 16 local artists will be setting out pieces of their work for the public to view this July 1.

“We love engaging with our community and promoting the local arts scene,” says Rima Bole, Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre director. “The Canada Day Art Scavenger Hunt is a perfect opportunity to showcase the local talent, while having fun doing it,” she says.

It’s the first of many events which will be designed to increase awareness and appreciation of local visual arts, says Andreana. “By working together, there is so much potential for NOTL to become known as a destination for visual arts.”

In the months leading up to this event, the Pumphouse held virtual meetings with local professional artists and representatives of art galleries and commercial spaces to form the collective. The goals of those who attended, most of whom work from home and at times feel disassociated from other artists, were prioritized as advancing the local arts community through promotion, partnership and networking initiatives, says Andreana.

“We’ve been talking to different artists, and they are wildly excited,” she says. “It was past time NOTL did something like this for us to come together and work as a group.”

It’s why Andreana joined the Pumphouse six years ago, she says. After travelling extensively to cities around the world with vibrant art communities, including her all-time hero, Penny Coles

The Local

Continued on page 9
Members of the local Leos Club, the youth organization of Lions International, were taking burger orders and delivering them as cars pulled up. Aidan Bilon (left, back), Zoe Abrahham, Bella Recine, Dawn Truon and Kylie Black, with Jason Christie and Andrew Christie in front, were happy to be helping out.

St. Davids Lions Susan and Allen Snider, Bonnie Pfab and Betty Snider were some of the many volunteers cooking burgers and fries for the Lions Friday drive-through fund-raising burger night. With no carnival, the burger nights are expected to continue until Thanksgiving.

(Photos by Penny Coles)

Continued from page 8

NOTL has everything needed ‘to make it happen’

Christopher Bowron*** .................................. 905-468-2269
Kim Elltoft** .................................................. 905-380-8011
Randall Armstrong** ..................................... 905-651-2977
Victoria Bolec* ............................................. 905-941-3726
Philip Bowron* ............................................. 905-348-7626
Bonnie Grimm* .............................................. 905-468-1256
Nicole Vanderperk* ...................................... 905-941-4585
Viviane Elliot** ............................................. 905-468-2142
Thomas Elliot** ........................................... 905-380-9126
Jane Elliot* ..................................................... 905-988-8776
Cheryl Carmichael* ...................................... 905-941-0276
Sarah Gledhill .............................................. 905-685-2458
Christine Bruce** ......................................... 905-328-9703
Linda Williams** .......................................... 905-401-4240
Caroline Peligrinab ....................................... 905-933-4983
Patricia Atherton* ........................................ 905-933-4983
Weston Miller* ............................................. 289-213-8681
Giovanna Rodriguez Martinez* ..................... 905-328-2445

***Broker of Record   ** Broker  *Sales Representative
Bylaw officers face challenges, especially during pandemic

Penny Coles
The Local

There isn’t a week goes by that councillors don’t talk about bylaw officers – whether there are enough of them (there never are), how hard they’re working, how many tickets they’re issuing, and during the pandemic, sometimes, how badly they’re treated.

In a tourist town such as Niagara-on-the-Lake, just writing parking tickets could keep a small complement of bylaw officers busy, but add to that a new parks bylaw, trees, noise and short-term rental issues, and they are extra busy during the tourism season.

Craig Larmour, director of planning, oversees the bylaw enforcement department.

He says although there are specific shifts and duties laid out, they are flexible, especially at this time of year, and even more so during a pandemic, when there are more complaints and more restrictions to enforce.

At the moment the town is attempting to hire an enforcement officer. There are two year-round enforcers, one of them for parking, and four seasonal parking officers, as well as one seasonal bylaw officer. And there is one full-time position designated as an urban forestry officer to deal with the tree bylaw, but who can also help out with other duties.

That person, Larmour says, “can be all over the place.”

The year-round officers are experienced, and can also help out wherever needed, he says.

Shifts are staggered, with hours covered seven days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 12 to 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

There is also some parking enforcement 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

During the pandemic, parking officers help out by responding to COVID-19 related complaints over the weekend, in addition to their regular duties.

“Because of COVID,” says Larmour, “these days, it’s all hands on deck. That person, Larmour says, “can be all over the place.”

The vast majority of people are polite and respectful. They might be frustrated about being ticketed, but they’re still polite. While COVID restrictions bring the most complaints, the new ban on barbecues in town parks is also keeping officers busy. Most people aren’t aware of the ban, and behave respectfully when it’s explained to them, packing up and moving on, although one person recently set the grass on fire instead, which was quickly extinguished.

Most of the seasonal bylaw officers find their work rewarding, and will return each year, at least until they’re finished their schooling, says Larmour.

“Most of them like being here, and find it a great opportunity to get some experience before moving along. Some officers experience some crazy situations that are not the norm, but it’s very occasionally, and it’s just part of the job.”

Ben Hopkins, supervisor of enforcement services, says he’s grateful to work alongside a group of dedicated bylaw and parking enforcement staff. “This is a group of staff who are committed and strive to complete their work well,” he says.

“In addition to their typical responsibilities, officers have worked tirelessly over the last year.” They’ve responded to more than 6,000 concerns related to the enforcement of the provincial COVID-19 regulations, “a difficult task that I appreciate and respect more each day.”

CAO Marine Clarke is also pleased and proud of the bylaw staff during a difficult time.

“I feel incredibly fortunate that Niagara-on-the-Lake has a good team of bylaw enforcement and parking officers. The team works hard to support the community and respond to bylaw inquiries and complaints,” says Clarke.

“In addition to their regular duties, they have effectively and respectively taken on enforcement duties related to provincial orders and regulations, with great professionalism and courtesy. Their job certainly is not easy, but they work hard, and I am so proud of the entire team.”

If you encounter one of the town’s bylaw officers at work, it wouldn’t hurt to say hello and thanks for doing a thankless job. Working in enforcement and parking are Chris, and April, Kristina, Katie, Joe and Ty, and Devon and Zachary. (Photos supplied)
Surface restoration of service bay to proceed

Penny Coles  
The Local

Councillors are supporting a proposal for the Dock Area subdivision to restore the footprint of a historic engine house service pit, just south of Turntable Way.

Volunteers have designed and ordered two interpretive bronze plaques, one for the railway turntable in the Dock Area, and the other to mark the site of the old engine house nearby.

In addition, Dock Area resident Ron Simkus is leading an initiative to restore the top of the rectangular outline of the repair bay on the engine house site, which was provided to a pit for mechanics to work on the underside of engines from below.

The project received council support Monday, but with a caveat.

Simkus was worried councillors might ask for public consultation during an October review of the Dock Area Master Plan, which would cause substantial delay, but they were convinced that the 98 emails received in support of the project were sufficient to show the public approval of his plans.

However, CAO Marnie Cluckie told council stage one and stage two archeological studies of the area where surface digging will occur is required under provincial legislation. She said work can begin as soon as a consultant can be engaged to do it.

Simkus had been forewarned that Cluckie was following provincial legislation to the letter, calling for the archeological sifting and report on the seven inches of soil that will be removed.

The digging should take only a few hours, and the sifting, he hopes, done concurrently, not too much longer.

He is expecting he whole project, including the installation of the plaques, to be completed this summer.

The project, Simkus told councillors and heritage committee members, will be entirely carried out by volunteers, at no cost to the town. The repair pit itself won’t be excavated — volunteers want to restore the rails on the surface, using railroad ties, cut in 24-inch lengths, to fill in the recesses in the pit walls. The end result would be two rails on top of the engine house repair pit, with the plaque explaining the work that was carried out there.

The volunteers will simply be reinstalling the surface features as they were in 1856, without disturbing any of the archaeologically significant material on the site, Simkus said.

PGM Rail Services in Niagara Falls, which specializes in restoring old rail stations, is donating the material needed, and the labour, which means professionals are doing the work, Simkus said.

He was concerned any delay of the project could put off PGM, which is ready to proceed, but was relieved to obtain permission from Cluckie to at least have materials delivered to the site, without waiting for the archeological study to be completed.

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Virtual open house reveals strong public opposition to John Street subdivision

Penny Coles  
The Local

A virtual open house last week couldn’t match the interest in an oft-discussed community centre meeting that filled the auditorium in 2018 to discuss Benny Marotta’s John Street East development proposal, but the sentiments expressed were similar in opposition to his current subdivision proposal.

Both meetings showed strong objections to two large developments proposed by companies owned by Marotta. It was at that first meeting in 2018, intended as an opportunity for the public to speak out about a proposal to turn the historic Randwood Estate on John Street East into a hotel and conference centre, that the public heard about a subdivision to be built next door.

That was the topic of last week’s virtual meeting, the first opportunity for the public to address Solmar’s completed application for a subdivision on John and Charlotte Streets, bordering the Rand Estate property.

Members of SORE (Save Our Rand Estate), which has been involved in legal challenges regarding the hotel development proposal — now apparently dropped, at least temporarily, by Marotta’s Two Sisters Resorts — and others spoke in opposition to the subdivision proposal, chiefly based on the density of the project as inappropriate for the neighbourhood, and the destruction of environmental and heritage assets on the properties.

Paul Lowes of SGA Planning and Design, representing Marotta, defended the proposed density, citing regional and provincial policies regarding mixed types of housing and density requirements, with 125 single family homes and 66 semi-detached.

Plans for the two properties are still to be reviewed by the Conservation Review Board, which will offer an opinion on the impact the development will have on heritage assets, scheduled to be held July 19.

Several residents expressed distrust for Solmar’s heritage preservation promises, after witnessing the cutting of trees, and the destruction of significant landscape and other heritage assets on the Randwood Estate property.

Also of concern is the height of the subdivision, with the proposal to raise the grade of the site in some areas. Solmar representatives explained that will be necessary for storm and sewage drainage, but residents say it will result in some of the new dwellings being substantially higher than neighbouring homes.

Other issues expressed by residents involve concern of increased traffic, including what will come from construction and the application proposing the narrow width of roads in the subdivision, the destruction of more trees, and the underground water management system that is being proposed.

Plans for the next opportunity for public input will be another virtual meeting to be held Wednesday, July 14 at 5 p.m.

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NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of the Corporation of the Town Niagara-on-the-Lake has amended By-Law 4308-09 to establish an all-way stop at the intersection of Garrison Village Drive and Jordan Street/Perez Road.

Currently, only Jordan Street and Perez Road traffic is required to stop. Based on the amended By-Law, now drivers on Garrison Village Drive are required to stop as well.

Drivers are urged to use extra caution at this intersection as traffic on Garrison Village Drive adjusts to the new stop signs.

New stop signs will be erected on June 28, 2021, and enforcement of the all-way stop will commence immediately upon installation.

Those with questions are encouraged to contact Mike Kojlenovic, Engineering Supervisor for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake by emailing mike.kojlenovic@notl.com or calling (905) 468-3061.
Continued from page 13

Rev. Leighton Lee is settling in at St. Mark’s, and anxious to get back to in-person church services. (Photo supplied)

Penny Coles
The Local

The new rector of St. Mark’s Church is “slowly but surely” settling in at the rectory, and cautiously doing what he can to meet members of the church community during the challenging time of a pandemic. Rev. Leighton Lee started at St. Mark’s on June 1, having arrived from Alberta, where he was rector of the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in downtown Calgary, and dean of the Calgary diocese.

The move has been “quite daunting,” but the work is getting done, he says, while relaxing on the back porch of the Byron Street rectory, a “huge, formidable space” for one man to rattie around in. He’s surrounded himself with his beloved antiques — collecting them is one of his passions — in a space that, while large, he admits “is a better fit for all of my stuff, and it’s fun to be in a place that’s old, historic and filled with character.”

Lee, 48, says he was familiar with Niagara-on-the-Lake, but just as a visitor, when he was considering the move. His first experience in NOTL was visiting a musician who had been his cello teacher in school, and remained a friend who later moved to town. When he reconnected with her recently, she reminded him of a lunch they’d had with Bob Wright, the long-time minister of St. Mark’s who retired and moved from the area in 2015. Although since then Lee’s only visited the area a few times, “it seems a town of wonderful, eccentric people — and I don’t mean that disparagingly, I’m eccentric too. It’s full of colourful and interesting people, in a place steeped in history. It’s a good fit for me.”

Lee was drawn to take the position at St. Mark’s because he was ready for something new. He’d been feeling he’d done all he could do in Calgary, and didn’t want to just tread water — that’s not healthy, he added. And life was drawing him east. “I always envisioned myself coming back to this part of the world, and this isn’t a bad place to be. It has a great, healthy parish, it’s a place with marvellous history, and it’s a fantastic town. It was a place I would resonate with, with people that would resonate with me.”

He thinks his theological view and world view will be a good fit with the St. Mark’s community, he says. “It’s difficult to explain, but it feels right. I get a good feeling.”

In addition to getting used to the rectory, he’s learning about the downtown of NOTL on weekends during the tourism season. The intersection at King and Queen Streets is to be avoided, he’s discovered, and he doesn’t understand why horse-drawn carriages are being protested, when it seems the horses are perfectly safe on the Old Town streets.

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He learned years ago, during that first visit to NOTL, about the acoustics in St. Mark’s and its hosting of an annual music festival, and admits that music is his passion. “I’m a huge music lover,” he says, “especially of really good sacred music,” but also of music in general. Lee says he can’t wait until it can once again be part of the church, giving the church one more avenue to be part of the community.

Lee’s interest in expanding St. Mark’s community engagement is one of the reasons he was a good candidate for the position of rector, says parishioner Gary Zalepa, who was part of the selection committee. While it’s the Anglican diocese and Bishop that ultimately make the decision, he and two
other parishioners were involved in the process.

Although the Rev. William Roberts left early in 2020, the church waited until last fall to begin the search for his replacement, with two interim pastors serving the parish for the last 16 months. COVID was not a great time to interview people, or to look for someone interested in moving, says Zalepa. “We were really reached out, making phone calls, supporting the community. ”

The pandemic demonstrated the need for engaging people who was interested in moving, or to look for someone great time to interview people who are members of the community at large, ” says Zalepa. “We’re looking at ways to engage the community in a meaningful way. ”

One of his hopes, is the continuation and even expansion of music and other outreach programs at St. Mark’s. Music is Lee’s passion, but so, he explains, is growing the role of the church in the community. The church, he says, “can bring people together for all kinds of reasons.”

He and St. Mark’s parishioners are struggling with the church closure due to COVID and not being able to meet in person, but “Zoom has become a wonderful tool,” as have backyards, the church grounds and even the cemetery, where a small number of people can meet, masked, physical distancing and obeying all the restrictions, he says. “We’ve had various Zoom meetings, but we’re certainly looking forward to a celebration in the fall. So we all need to be good, play our part, get vaccinated and don’t blow it,” he cautions.

Because what he is most looking forward to is having people back in church, where they can interact and participate in Sunday services. “I can’t wait to get back in there. We all can’t wait.” Lee is a graduate of the University of Calgary with a bachelor’s degree in art history, and of general theological seminary in New York, where he earned his master of divinity degree. He was ordained deacon and priest in the Diocese of Calgary in 2003.

Lee, he says, seems the perfect person for the position of rector, with his determination that a church should be about much more than opening for a few hours on Sunday mornings. It’s crucial, he says, for churches to serve other functions in their communities.

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Bags to go

Rachel DeBoer, Samantha Freit, Julia King, Meleo Gruosso and Janvi Ganatra were at the community centre Saturday to give away about 100 You Got This bags, filled with gifts for teens to encourage them through the pandemic. The gifts for the bags, an initiative of the Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, were donated by local businesses. (Photos submitted)
Tom Chapman was busy Monday at the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, visiting artists in their studios, gathering and sharing information.

“Are a line owned by a group of three employees, as well as connections with more than 40 Indigenous artists from all corners of Canada to Nunavut, Taylor, an Inuvialuit carver from Tuktoyaktuk. The package arrived as the interview was in progress, and Chapman couldn’t wait to get the box open.

“Last year-and-a-half ago, Chapman has gathered a line of 8,000 Native artists, all of whom are owners of the company. We’re planning to have suppliers on hand for these folks (the artists) to sell directly as well.”

Chapman is also excited about the recent addition of the work of another Algonquin artist, Kim Height, who lives in Pelham. Two of her paintings recently sold at the gallery.

Since opening the doors in March, Chapman is pleased with its reception in town. “We’re beyond pleasantly surprised,” he raves. “In March when we were open, we did 10 sales. The activity and the support we saw far exceeded all expectations, especially for that time of year. At that time, it was a lot of people from out of town, but it was the enthusiasm and the positive responses that blew us away.”

“The last eight days that we’ve been open,” he goes on, “that’s continued. It’s more on an even keel, no line-ups at the door. The real silver lining is we’ve gotten to meet a lot of locals. The positive feedback with what they’re seeing, and they’re bringing back. That’s key to us, that the local folks really appreciate what they’re seeing and enjoying when they come into the space.”

Chapman doesn’t approach visitors with a hard sell. He prefers to let people roam and to answer questions as they arise. He says he gets as many queries from visitors about the $50 dream catchers, each one different from the other, as he does for the $10,000 sculptures on display.

“Things here are touch- ing people emotionally,” he tells The Local. “People have to gravitate toward something, and we’ll provide whatever information we can once they have attached themselves to something.”

Chapman has gathered a group of three employees at Upper Canada, all with a like-minded interest in native art. One of his new charges worked at the location’s previous incarnation offering period photography to tourists. Another employee is a retired pilot who spent most of his career flying in the northern regions of the country, experiencing what life is like for many of the artists whose work is featured at Upper Canada.

Chapman looks forward to the loosening of COVID restrictions. When his gallery became an even more visible focal point for Indigenous art.

“We’re planning to have artists on site every weekend,” he promises. “We’ll start outside, but we’ve left a space here, where they can come in and paint. It will open the door for these folks (the artists) to sell directly as well.”

“The member of the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre would like to see a bigger emphasis on art in NOTL. He welcomes more galleries along Queen Street and says he is working with the Pumphouse on future initiatives, such as an "art walk" in town. In the long run, he’s hoping that he can continue to provide that bridge between artist and collector, encouraging Indigenous artists to continue spreading their culture through their creations. The last year-and-a-half has caused a lot of artists to step away from their trade,” he laments. “I’m spending as much of my time right now trying to attract those folks back, to create a little more of the excitement that used to be there. Inviting them to get back into the fold, and letting them know that we’re willing to work with them.”

Upper Canada Native Art is located at 109 Queen Street, at the corner of Victoria Street.

Tom Chapman unveils a beautiful alabaster sculpture of a polar bear, by Innuault carver Or- dall Taylor, at Upper Canada Native Art. (Photos by Mike Balsom)
**Museum presentation looks at ‘aggressive assimilation’**

Kim Wade
Special to The Local

Canada’s legacy toward the Indigenous peoples of this land has a sordid past. The recent discovery at a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C., is further evidence to this sorrowful history. The unearthing of 215 bodies of Indigenous children buried at this school has highlighted the truth behind the impact of residential schools on Indigenous peoples. Murray Sinclair, former member of the Senate and First Nations lawyer, judge and former chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, addressed the world on June 1, detailing his experience on the commission. He said that he “openly and willingly” listened to the stories of the survivors, and they ultimately named the interim report, They Came for the Children, to “draw the attention of the Canadian public to the fact that the government of Canada set out in a deliberate policy to remove the children away from their parents, from their communities and from the influences of their elders, their brothers, their sisters in order to indoctrinate them into a different culture, and they accomplished that to a large extent. By the thousands,” he continued, “children were taken away and placed in residential schools.”

Sinclair’s reserved tone could not mask the emotion lying underneath as he related stories of the survivors describing children enduring daily physical, emotional and sexual abuse. He recounts what he found most shocking personally were the stories of children who died in the schools at the hands of the administrators.

He prepares his audience for the inevitability for more burial sites to be discovered at other residential school sites. He talks directly to the survivors, moving forward through the healing process. PhD student at Trent University and lecturer at Brock University, Bobby “Stanley” Henry recognizes this past, but also looks to the future. “Everyone must recognize that reconciliation is not solely a state-driven process. Rather, everyone (all Canadians) plays a role in the process of reconciliation by learning the truth. It will take a collective effort and will be generations of learning to enact meaningful change,” he says.

Henry holds a master of education degree from Lakehead University in Indigenous studies and is a community member of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. He is a member of the Ball Deer Clan and Cayuga Nation. His research interests are in Indigenous education, Indigenous language reclamation programming, Indigenous identity, Hodinohsoyenu Knowledge Systems, and teacher education.

The hour-long lecture unpacking the topic of residential schools is hosted by the NOTL Museum and will take place on Thursday, June 24 at 11 a.m.

The presentation will take place over Zoom. Admission is free but registration is required. For further information and registration contact the NOTL Museum at 905-468-3912 or notlmuseum.ca.
Minor sports back in action

Lifting of some provincial restrictions means some minor sports activities can take place, such as skills training, but not games, yet. The Virgil Sports Park was busy Monday evening with kids practising lacrosse and soccer. (Photos by Mike Balsom)

Young soccer players, all in the under-six age division, were on the field for the first time Monday.
Beautiful Baltimore orioles like sweet treats

David Gilchrist
Special to The Local

One of the most beautiful summer visitors to our region would undoubtedly be the Baltimore oriole (Icterus galbula — not the baseball team). Its name was derived from the heraldic colours of Lord Baltimore, who was the governor of the Maryland Colony. In fact it is the state bird of Maryland. The male’s beautiful and bright orange and black plumage, in addition to its clear and distinct call, is both a blessing to see and to hear.

As a newcomer to the birding community, I first became aware of this beautiful and colourful bird to see in our backyards and in the neighbourhood.

Realizing that it was not a hummingbird (I’m a keen observer), I grabbed a quick photo, which was not too good as the bird was on the opposite side of the feeder, and a bird ID book. After realizing that it could be a Baltimore oriole, I investigated it further. This species is known to have a sweet ‘beck’ and, as I had noticed, visits hummingbird feeders regularly. I learned that people also put out grape jelly and half-oranges for these orioles to feed on.

Enough of these sweet treats will ensure you of frequent summer visits, and they may, with a regular supply, set up shop, or nest in the area. They also eat lots of insects, which helps to control them.

The nest is a unique construction in the form of a hanging pouch, built at the end of hanging branches in deciduous trees. The pouch is woven together with strong fibres, and lined with softer material. It is built with such sturdiness that it can be sometimes re-used in following years.

Baltimore orioles, like so many of our summer birds, winter in the south in the southern states and Central America. Their southern migration, beginning in July and August, is earlier than most migratory species.

Last year, we had greater fortune, spotting both male and females at the hummingbird feeder.

This year, it has been pleasant to hear the distinct call in the neighbourhood as one, at least, flies around the immediate block. I have assumed it was a male, probably trying to attract a female to the area. I’ve been able to get a few photos of this one at our feeder, and have spotted one in the Paradise Grove area, and several along the walking trail at east Port Weller, a great birding location for many species.

Two factors seem to be affecting the range and distribution of these birds. One is climate change, which has reduced their presence in western areas. The other factor is the loss of elm trees from Dutch elm disease in our area. The elm trees were once the preferred nesting tree for the oriole.

All in all, a most interesting and colourful bird to see in our backyards and in the neighbourhood.
CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU

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7 Property document
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12 Can plating
13 Harley, often
14 Retirement arrangement
15 Legend
16 Class
17 Mendelssohn’s “Scottish Symphony” key
18 Living on land and in water
19 Thin coating
20 Thin coating
21 The big bang
22 Dire
23 Story
24 Earlier
25 Remorse
26 A way to disappear
27 Watery swelling
28 Sty fighter?
30 Pearl-shaped stringed instrument
31 Ice hockey player Bobby ---
32 Beatle married to Bach
33 Ferro
34 Bel Canto’s late son
35 Candidate’s aim
36 Liturgical text
37 Military nurses’ group (Abbr.)
38 Ego
39 Vegetarian food
40 Exchange
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