Dear Neighbours,

Thanks to your tremendous support, we have made our voices heard. Due to the overwhelming response to the Ottawa Hospital’s development application for Ruskin Park by the residents and the CHNA, the City’s planning office took much longer to review the application than they originally expected.

This caused the matter to be bumped from the Planning and Development Committee meeting calendar three times since November. Importantly, these delays allowed us more time to meet with some city council members and get our message out to the people making the final decision.

The city’s final report on the application was released Monday, January 20th and we were preparing for a January 28th meeting with the Planning and Development Committee. However, upon review of the City’s report and recommendations, the Ottawa Hospital has asked for a delay until March 25th. We anticipate TOH may come back with some form of amendment to their original application.

Those who sent in comments to the city will have received the planning office report and a notice of postponement for the meeting.

In response to some of the concerns we’ve raised, the report recommends a number of changes from the Hospital’s original request. Significantly, the City changed the open ended zoning originally requested (i2 Institutional) back to its current designation as Community Leisure space (L1) with an exception allowing the parking structure. This zoning designation better reflects the temporary nature of the parking on the site and is in keeping with the intent to return the land to use as a park.

Additionally, unlike the earlier report prepared for the related City Lease Agreement, this report does not include an endorsement of the proposal by our councillor, Ms Hobbs. Instead, she is noted as being “aware” of the application. A copy of the report is being posted on the CHNA website for your review.

In parallel to dealing with the development application itself, in November CHNA also made a formal presentation to the Planning and Development Committee to request that the Ruskin Park 30 year agreement be reinstated into the City of Ottawa new Official Plan. In 2003, when the city was amalgamated, the 30 year agreement was dropped without notice. This has formed the basis of the city’s position that they can proceed with the development of Ruskin Park.

The new Official Plan was adopted by City Council without our 30 year agreement policy and will now go the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for their final approval. CHNA provided the MMAH with details on why the policy should be restored and we have requested that the Ministry notify us of their decision. If the Ministry approves the Official Plan without our agreement, we can then appeal that decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

The next few weeks will be important ones. We will continue to inform City Councillors of our concerns. CHNA will finalize a presentation for Planning Committee, incorporating the city’s updated position. Our CHNA presentation will cover: history of Ruskin Park, the 30 year agreement, review of the rezoning application, impact of traffic to the community, as well as legal and moral issues.

We need as many people as possible to attend the March 25th meeting as a show of support from the community. It is vital that the city see that this is an issue that affects our entire community, so please “pencil in” that date to join us at City Hall. Keep in mind that if you wish to speak at the meeting you are allowed to submit a request to address the Planning and Development Committee personally.

As always, we keep the Ruskin Park Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CHNARuskinPark and the CHNA website: www.chnaottawa.ca up to date. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me at:

Sincerely,

Karen Wright

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