

**Sibelius Square Working Group Meeting Minutes (as amended Nov. 15)
Room 107 Royal St. George's College**

Meeting commenced @ 7:35pm

Chair: Patrick Kennedy

Also Present: Chris Ronson, Sandy Straw, Kristina Renders, Mike Coleman, Gillian Morton, Premika Ratnam, David Mills, Martin Silva, Fred Freedman, Adam Vaughan, Paul Martel, Caroline Harvey, Tom Friedland, Ginny Brett

1. Minutes from the previous meeting are not available for approval; will wait to hear from Sarah Scott.
2. Agenda is approved unanimously.
3. Working Group Communications
 - a. Agenda Planning – an agenda planning meeting was held on the Saturday before this Wednesday's meeting. In the future, a planning committee made up of some resident members of the WG will meet to plan a focused agenda for the next WG meeting. The agenda will be posted on the SSWG web-site.
 - b. Orientation for observers of the WG meetings – a WG member will arrive early for the next WG meeting to address questions/concerns of newcomers.
 - c. Posting of documentation on the website - of the WG findings, as suggested by Paul Martel. Chris Ronson offers to provide scaled map of JSS. Paul and Patrick have maps in hand.
4. A sub-group has been formed to communicate with the Design and Planning Dept., Chris Ronson (rep.). The committee will include, Gillian, Tom, Kristina, Patrick and Paul.
5. Motion from Gillian, seconded by Tom: That a new seat be created for a representative of Play at the Park (PATP).
 - a. Discussion:
 - i. Rationale: Play at the Park represents a large constituency and has researched solutions for the square, but isn't currently represented on the WG.
 - ii. Sandy Straw points to equity as essential to community process.
 - iii. Chris Ronson suggests larger groups are difficult to manage.
 - iv. Premika stated, for the record, that Share the Square does not represent the views of Play at the Park. PATP is interested in park function and design; is not a parent or dog group.
 - v. David Mills stated that Play at the Park wanted two seats on the working group instead of one.
 - b. The motion was unanimously passed.
 - c. The chair observed that in practice, the working group has allowed alternates to sit as members of the working group if the original

member is unable to attend. The alternate representative should be briefed by the original member on the WG's business. In this case, members of PATP, Premika Ratnam and David Mills, were asked to select an official representative among themselves.

7. Planning for a Community Meeting

- a. There was consensus that the WG identify solutions to address off-leash dog use in the park and bring a recommendation/s to the community.
- b. There was consensus that the WG should also bring a range of other issues to the community for consultation, such as playground objectives. Our focus should not be solely on dogs.
- c. Suggestion is made that the community meeting be held after the holidays possibly January, and that we ask the elected councillor to chair the meeting.
- d. Suggestion is made that child care be available on-site during the community meeting.
- e. Use technology to get information to public before community meeting

8. Proposals for off-leash dog use in JSS. The following three scenarios were presented to the WG for discussion:

- a. Providing in Sibelius Square a dedicated **enclosure** for dogs off leash, approximately equal in area to that shown on the BSA drawing, during waking hours (8am till 10pm?) (presented by Tom);
- b. Requiring dogs to be **on leash at all times** in the square, while working aggressively with the city to find other spaces in the neighbourhood where dogs can be exercised off-leash(presented by Premika);
- c. Allowing dogs off-leash in all open areas of the square, with time restrictions, i.e. **the status quo**. (presented by Gillian).

Discussion of the three Scenarios was as follows:

- Manifestations of the conflict between off-leash dogs and other uses were mentioned:
 - During off-leash hours, dogs seem to take over the whole park.
 - Outside of these hours, park users must deal with dog feces, damaged turf, and large holes
- Enclosures - Pro:
 - As the most broadly acceptable solution, an enclosure may allow community to move forward
 - May reduce social tension by legitimizing an existing use
 - Legitimate but contained dogs-off-leash use may improve the sense of community and security by bringing “eyes and ears on the park.”

- Would extend the hours of off-leash use available to dog owners
 - Protects dogs from running away or into traffic
- Enclosures - Con:
 - Carving up the park; aesthetic issues; interrupted view-lines
 - Parks have a natural capacity; this park is too small for an enclosure.
 - Enclosure could become a “dead space” when not in use, if there are no secondary uses of the space
 - May result in noise
 - Users may continue to let dogs run in the rest of the square in spite of an enclosure
 - Dogs may be brought from other areas to use the enclosure, worsening the overcrowding
- Time Sharing (status quo) – Pro
 - Open approach allows a broad interpretation of the park, and responsiveness to changing demographics
 - Cheaper
- Time Sharing (status quo) - Con
 - Does not address the use conflicts described above
- Require Dogs to be Leashed – Pro
 - The square is too small for dogs off leash
 - Pack behaviour of dogs off leash is incompatible with other uses
 - Other spaces can be found for off-leash activity
 - Removes the one use that is incompatible with all others
- Require Dogs to be Leashed – Con
 - It may be impossible to convince dog owners to use another space if they did not want to.
 - It is not clear that we have any alternative spaces that would be acceptable to the community

Additional Remarks

- Martin Silva outlined a program at Trinity-Bellwoods Park that involved neighbours acting as “vigilantes” to pressure dog owners into compliance regarding by-laws.
- STS has chosen to pursue a compromise solution, an enclosure, which will be well designed, provide safety for dogs and children, and relieve social tension.
- From ADO; while a majority support an enclosure, there is an overwhelming preference among ADOers for time share; possibly a 7:30-9:30 time change like at Vermont Square to relieve congestion at 6pm.
- PATP expresses concern over demands being made on JSS, a small park, by many users; would like to look at alternate spaces for

dogs in the neighbourhood. Use models from Mississauga and Chicago for guidance.

- Gillian makes a suggestion that proposals brought to the community be posted on the site with a description along with a pro/con for each model.
9. Financing and Improvements to Jean Sibelius Square;
 - a. Tom reports that 100 Spadina is moving forward.
 - b. Adam outlines three potential sources of funding; 1. Tax Increment Financing 2. Reconfigure green space to generate wealth 3. Self Tax Initiative.
 - c. Chris Ronson; consider phasing options.
 10. Date for next meetings; November 15th and December 6th (tentative)
Meeting adjourned 9:30pm