

WPRA Annual General Meeting – April 24 2024 7:00 PM – 8:08 PM @ Hugh Garner Co-Op

Next scheduled committee meeting - May 15 2024 - 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM @ Hugh Garner Co-Op

AGM slides: [WRPA AGM 2024](#)

Attendees

24 in total:

Acting Committee

Andrew Haisley

Christina Robinson

Kip Phillips

Krista Lamb

Heather Wilberforce

Micheal Hussey

Sherwood Flemming

Guest Speakers

Kristyn Wong-Tam - MPP for Toronto Centre

Marzio Silva - Senior Advisor Constituent Relations from Councillor Moise's Office

Mina Mawani - CEO, Dixon Hall

David Reycraft - Director of Housing, Dixon Hall

Other Attendees

13 from the Winchester Park community

Meeting Notes

The meeting opened at 7:05 PM.

1. Heather Wilberforce greeted the audience and introduced the WPRA.
2. Christina Robinson gave a financial summary.
3. Andrew Haisley explained the structure of the board of directors, named the volunteers we have so far and asked for any additional board volunteers. None were forthcoming and the new board therefore consists of: Heather Wilberforce, Christina Robinson, Andrew Haisley, Sherwood Fleming, Krista Lamb, Michael Hussey and Kip Phillips.
4. Krista Lamb introduced David Reycraft and Mina Mawani from Dixon Hall. David spoke partly answering a pre-prepared list of questions and partly giving a broader update:
 - a. Dixon Hall has a good working relationship with the city.
 - b. For the Parliament Street houses, there have been bumps along the way with bylaw and zoning issues, hence the long construction period.
 - c. Tenants for Parliament will come from a central waitlist governed by the city and will be adults with a long history of homelessness.
 - d. Former tenants are unlikely to be re-houses in the renovated buildings.
 - e. There will be 24 hour support for tenants covering harm reduction, food, and mental health support.
 - f. Some tenants will be active drug users.
 - g. The buildings should be in use and tenanted by the end of summer 2024.
 - h. There is no funding for the Wellesley houses in place yet and they would appreciate our voices on that (letters to the city, MP, MPP, etc.). Also noted that heritage designation causes complications and delays.
 - i. When TCHC handed over the various buildings in this area along with some in the west of Toronto there were 204 people living in them. There are currently 107 and that number will rise as renovations continue.
 - j. 41 Rose Avenue will have the same mix and source of tenants as Parliament.
 - k. Other buildings in the area under development are 220 & 230-232 Carlton.
 - l. Kristyn Wong-Tam noted that there is a general focus at the city, provincial and federal level on new buildings and that pressuring the Ontario Minister of Housing might help.
 - m. There will be an open house or similar events for the rooming houses when they open.
 - n. 41 Rose Avenue is not guaranteed to be used to house people coming out of hospital.
 - o. There is funding for the operational costs of the Parliament buildings right now but this comes from the city and budgeting is an annual process.

5. Krista Lamb introduced Marzio Silva who took questions as he spoke:
 - a. Gave Chris Moise's apologies for not being able to attend.
 - b. Talked about the Ontario Street renovations and the public meeting coming up shortly. He also had fliers for people to take away on the subject.
 - c. The dog park suggestion for Winchester is something that Councilor Moise is willing to take up but suggestions will need to come via the Toronto Centre Projects website. He noted that city staff are opposed.
 - d. There is \$750K set aside for improvements in Winchester Park, St James Town, and Cabbagetown which will be allocated through proposals on the Toronto Centre Projects website.
 - e. He said that the city had told him there were an average of only 5 encampments in Allan Gardens at the moment. Audience members corrected him on this noting that there are more than that. He also said that people who camp there and don't accept services will be removed within a few days.
 - f. If we have concerns about a particular location, Councillor Moise will be visiting places of concern in the area between 2 & 5 PM on June 3rd.
 - g. It is unknown if there is any cycling infrastructure planned for the Ontario Street improvements, Marzio will find out and let us know.
 - h. Broadly, the Councillor wants to see more affordable housing in the area and to see the Wellesley Street houses redeveloped.

6. Krista Lamb introduced Kristyn Wong-Tam who talked briefly about broader Ontario issues:
 - a. New (opposition) portfolio is LGBTQ+, small business, and the Attorney General's office.
 - b. Emphasized the need to support small businesses as they are, in aggregate, major employers.
 - c. Noted a rise in hate against the LGBTQ+ community.
 - d. There is a general delay in access to justice due to underfunding of court operations.

7. Krista Lamb closed the meeting with the following comments:
 - a. It's worth emailing us with issues as we can work with the city to get things resolved, Flos William being an example and Lancaster Avenue being another.
 - b. Thanks to everyone who attended including the guest speakers.
 - c. Volunteers don't have to be directors and we can always use help.

The meeting closed at 8:08.

Donations

We collected a total of \$133.70 which we will keep as a cash float to avoid bank charges when paying for small items.

Summary

After a 4 year hiatus, the WPRA Annual General Meeting convened on April 24, 2024, at Hugh Garner Co-Op with 24 attendees, including acting committee members and guest speakers Kristyn Wong-Tam (Toronto Centre MPP), Marzio Silva (Councillor Moise's office), Mina Mawani (CEO, Dixon Hall), and David Reycraft (Director of Housing, Dixon Hall). Our new committee of seven directors was formally confirmed before we moved to our guest speakers.

David Reycraft and Mina Mawani provided updates on housing, discussing construction progress for the buildings at 502-508 Parliament Street, tenant demographics, and tenant services. Key points included the long construction period for the Parliament Street houses due to the pandemic as well as bylaw and zoning issues and that tenants will be sourced from a central waitlist managed by the city. They emphasized that there will be 24-hour support for tenants, including harm reduction and mental health services. Kristyn Wong-Tam talked about issues in the area as well as broader city and provincial topics including rising hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community, promoting small businesses, and delays in access to justice due to court operational resource constraints. Marzio Silva addressed general community concerns and upcoming projects, including renovations to Ontario Street and the ongoing situation in Allan Gardens.

There were lively and relevant question and answer sessions with the meeting being a very positive and energetic new start. We also received \$133.70 in donations which will help with future events and campaigns.

Special thanks are due to the Hugh Garner co-op for providing us with the meeting space and audio-visual equipment.