

## This Week in the Annex:

January 10, 2024

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### ARA Board Meeting Tomorrow

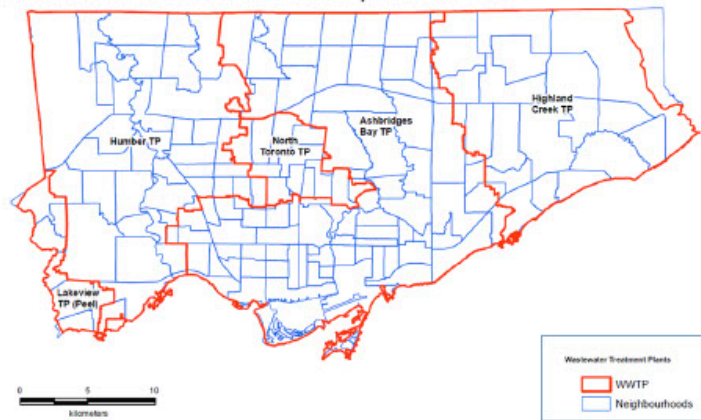
The ARA will be holding its monthly Board meeting tomorrow night. Do plan to join us on Zoom: **Thursday, January 11th** from **7:00 to 9:00 pm**. Just send an email with the subject line "Board Meeting" to [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) by noon tomorrow and our indefatigable Board Secretary, Micky Fraterman, will send you the link. Hope to see you there.



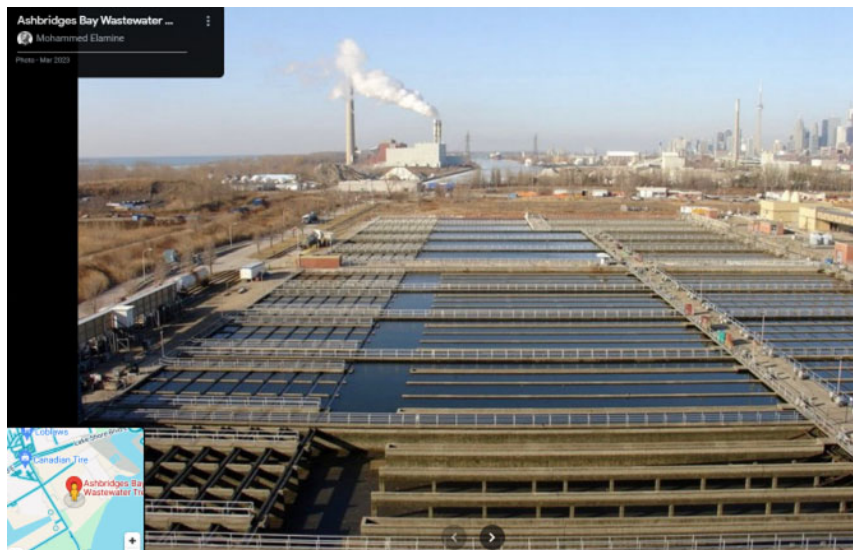
### What Holiday?

Oh dear. This first newsletter issue of 2024 feels a bit like déjà vu all over again. The most recent strain of Covid 19 — the JN.1 variant — has swept the city according to [wastewater readings](#). Even in the tiny cadre of ARA Board members, three of us have independently caught the bug. So if you are one of those multiple Annexionians who succumbed to the virus and lost Christmas and/or New Year's, our condolences to you.

**Figure 1. Catchment areas of wastewater treatment plants in Toronto**



The ins and outs (sorry) of wastewater treatment in Toronto are detailed in Toronto's "[Wastewater Surveillance Dashboard Technical Notes](#)." According to the map provided, contributions from the Annex flow to the massive Ashbridges Bay treatment plant, pictured below.



## An Ounce of Prevention...

For the rest of us, never was there a better time to consider vaccination. If you've been on top of your game since the dawn of Covid, you'll have had 7 jabs in total. Any fewer, and you are probably due for an update.

Never, too, was there a better time to break out those N95 masks. Who cares what those around you on the subway or in stores or crowded venues may think? And that struggle for those of you who wear glasses? Best to get over it. You want to be safe.

Finally, if you feel any symptoms at all, start testing. As of press time, test kits were still freely available at the checkout desk at Shoppers on Dupont. They were also reportedly in supply at the public library on Spadina Road. But it would

be wise to phone ahead before heading out just to be sure the kits are still on hand.

## A Pound of Cure

For those who do test positive for Covid, we're hearing encouraging anecdotal reports about the antiviral drug Paxlovid. Those who are eligible can pop into any pharmacy and source it pronto, courtesy Health Canada. (If you want to know whether and when you're eligible, [click here](#) to access Ontario's Covid treatment screener.)



*Paxlovid doesn't come cheap. [According to one US source](#), each course of treatment costs between \$530-\$700 per person. (Yes, that's US dollars.) Pfizer's recent press release suggested the price will rise in 2024 to \$1,390 when sold to commercial enterprises!*

No doubt that Paxlovid leaves a foul taste in the mouth. But that's a small price to pay for greatly diminished symptoms. That said, do watch for [the Paxlovid Rebound](#). It seems that for about one in five patients, symptoms can reappear, even after three or four days of negative tests.

Best advice? No matter whether you're fighting the virus on your own or are lucky enough to have been armed with pharmaceutical support, be sure to give yourself a good ten days before even hoping you're possibly back to normal. Better safe than sorry. Take care!

## Let's Break a Deal

It feels like demands from developers for agreement re-trades are becoming as ubiquitous as Covid. We reported last month on two over-the-top applications

argued before the Committee of Adjustment (CofA). The first was for additional storeys to be added to the residential tower being erected just north of Bloor Street United Church (BSUC) at 300 Bloor. The second was for significant changes to the development long planned for the site a stone's throw away at 316 Bloor (on the northwest corner with Madison).

The BSUC application was summarily dismissed by CofA whose members argued that it was hardly minor and consequently not within the committee's jurisdiction ([see ARA Newsletter of Nov 22](#)). Yet taking the totally opposite tack, a different complement of CofA members acquiesced to the demands of 316 Bloor, albeit reluctantly.

## **Once More into the Breach**

And the no brainer result of these contradictory rulings? Cielo, the developer of the BSUC property, has appealed its rejection to TLAB — the Toronto Local Appeal Body.

The City itself has declined this fight. In fact, from the outset, City planners, legal staff, and Councillor Saxe chose to allow both requests to pass unchallenged through CofA, having wrested from the applicants a promise of several million dollars as compensation for the additional changes sought.

But our noble warriors on the ARA's Planning and Development committee (P+D) were determined to fight the appeal, taking hours of personal time during the holidays to complete and file a request to be a party at TLAB. Their argument is based on procedural grounds. The CofA, as the committee originally ruled, is not the appropriate venue for requesting such major changes. These are rightly the stuff of changes to zoning bylaws and thus should be subject to public consultation.





*300 Bloor was turned down by CofA when it asked for 5 more storeys.*

## **And Then There Were Two**

As for 316 Bloor being given the go-ahead – there was little the ARA could do. Under the rules, we had no standing. Only the developer or the City had the legal right to appeal the CofA's decision.

Obviously the developer wouldn't be appealing a decision in their favour. So, if there was to be any challenge at all, it had to come from the City. And it had to be filed by the unconscionably tight deadline of January 3rd — days before staff and Councillors were officially back to work.

The matter came to a head at the January 2nd meeting of P+D. In the presence of Councillor Saxe, P+D members and interested residents argued vehemently against what they saw as a cynical and outright abuse of the planning process. It was outrageous to circumvent long hours of community consultation and negotiation to undo agreements through a body never intended to deal with anything other than minor disputes between neighbours.



*316 Bloor at Madison asked for a further 7 storeys, 11 variations in all, and no parking — and they got it.*

## **Councillor Saxe Comes Through**

If you've managed to follow the story to this point, you'll understand that the issue is beyond complicated. You can read some of the background in [this letter Councillor Saxe sent to interested residents](#) explaining the reasons behind the City's (and her) actions.

That said, she responded positively to the eloquent pleas made by participants at the January 2nd meeting. The next day she told us that the City would appeal the decision on 316 Bloor — and we can report that the appeal was indeed filed in time — just under the deadline.

Whether the City will go all the way with this appeal is moot. In the final analysis, there's no doubt we are vulnerable to the whims of the Province. But surely that fight should be staged in the proper arena — not cynically pursued at the CofA?

We'll keep you posted.

## **Fraternities on Notice**

Talk about Christmas presents! The Annex received one longed-for gift this year: a letter from Councillor Saxe giving notice of motion to recognize and regulate frat houses as rooming houses. (If you need a refresher on why we're so thrilled, check out [the newsletter from last September 20th.](#))

We had been dismayed by her abstention from a similar vote at City Council when she first was elected under John Tory's mayoralty. But that was before she'd had an opportunity to investigate the issue. And now our Councillor has come full circle and is prepared to fight for what hasn't been achieved in the past despite multiple attempts.

You can [read her notice to Council here](#). But she can't get a new motion on the agenda and passed without significant support.

So even if you've written previously to complain about the frats, now's the time to dust off your keyboard and fire off yet another note — this one supporting Councillor Saxe's move, and, if you've the time, detailing your rationale.

Send your message to: [councillor\\_saxe@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_saxe@toronto.ca). Fingers crossed!



*The Deke's may consider themselves godlike as their banner last September proclaimed, but with luck they will soon be subject to some human regulation in the form of a municipal by-law.*

## Notes and Queries

### Rooftop Solar Webinar Tonight

Have you been thinking about harnessing the sun for powering your home? Then you'll be interested in tonight's free webinar (**January 10th** from **7:00 to 8:30 pm**) hosted by Tim Grant and advertised by our colleagues in the Harbord Village Residents' Association (HVRA). Here follows their notice:

#### *Installation Steps for Rooftop Solar*

*What homeowners can expect, and how they can speed up the installation process.*

*Mohamed Ahmed and Beau Badore will outline the steps involved in installing a rooftop solar system and connecting it to the grid. Participants will learn what to expect, and how they can speed up the process. Mohamed, the new Manager of Residential and Small Commercial Buildings in Toronto Hydro's Climate Action department, will highlight recent improvements to the process. He'll also examine standards and safety requirements and provide a broad perspective on the decarbonization of single-family houses. Beau, from solar installer Heliotechnik, will provide tips based on his company's experiences of installing rooftop systems in Toronto.*

To get the meeting link, register on EventBrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/753349036247?aff=oddtcreator>



**Game on!**



Are you a card playing fan of bridge or euchre? Perhaps you prefer board games like chess and Monopoly? Playing with words might be more up your alley with Scrabble or Bananagram. Heavens, you might even be a competitive jigsaw puzzler. (Yup — apparently that's a thing).

Whatever your choice of diversion, your ARA communications team is scheming to host a community evening, similar in intent to our "Meet n' Eat" events but one where you can socialize with other residents over games rather than food.

If such an evening strikes you as appealing, then please write to [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) with the subject line "Game On." Tell us what you'd like to play and we'll do our best to make it happen.



## **Snow, snow go away...**

We really can't complain after such a balmy December. Still, it was hard to watch that storm come in yesterday – especially for those Annexionians who are housebound once sidewalks are slippery with snow and ice.

For the second year in a row, the City will be clearing our sidewalks. Crews are scheduled to start ploughing when the snow is 2 cm deep (about the height of a quarter standing on its edge). That said, they will generally wait until after the snow has stopped falling, or when icy conditions dictate.

For full details on clearance schedules, just [click here](#). Let's hope you don't need to refer to that site very often.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

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The Annex Residents' Association