

This Week in the Annex:

January 31, 2024

Down at City Hall

Councillor Saxe did the most magnificent job fighting for the Annex at this past Monday's Planning and Housing Committee meeting — a committee on which she doesn't actually sit. We've got an articulate legal mind as our representative. If you've got some time, then click on the [YouTube archive of the meeting](#) to watch the discussion as it unfolds and to see her champion our interests.



Review of Section 45

Our Councillor had a win with the [first of her requests to be considered](#), one which was essentially focussed on asking for a report on the possibility of limiting the scope of applications that could be approved at the Committee of Adjustment.

ARA Chair, Rita Bilerman, spoke forcefully in favour of controlling the process by which developers can "double dip" — first securing a rezoning bylaw to permit their developments and then months or years afterwards applying to the

Committee of Adjustment to secure a “minor” variance such as the addition of 8 more storeys to a tower first negotiated at 29.

The committee asked that Staff report back by the fourth quarter of this year. We’ll let you know the outcome.



Sobering fact: During the discussion, Councillor Saxe pointed out that Toronto has more towers than Shanghai.

Regulating Fraternities

Alas, Councillor Saxe was not so successful in her bid to [bring fraternities under the control of the Multi-Tenant Housing Bylaw](#). The cards were stacked against her from the outset by a significant lobbying effort involving representatives of co-op housing (even though they were not the target of the ask) and spokespersons from the women’s frat houses (even though they are not the cause of the problems).

Her argument was that regulating the fraternities through the bylaw would allow two critical wins. The first would be to obtain the names and contact information for those individuals responsible for each house — details which at the moment remain closely guarded secrets. The second would be to authorize inspectors to actually enter and assess the safety of these houses.



The exterior upkeep of this frat house does not augur well for the state of the interior.

However, the committee councillors were not to be swayed by these considerations. Gord Perks noted it had taken him 15 years to get the bylaw on the books and that it was intended to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords, not to protect neighbours from inconsiderate fraternity brothers.

If there was a silver lining to the exercise, deputations by ARA Chair of Communications, Gillian Bartlett, and long-suffering frat neighbour, Jamie Paul Rock, convinced the other councillors present that some frats, at least, present a significant problem. As Josh Matlow put it, the Multi-Tenant Housing Bylaw was the wrong tool to use to bring them into line, but clearly something had to be done.

Getting the Ear of MLS

Carleton Grant, Executive Director of MLS (which is to say [Municipal Licencing Standards](#) rather than the more commonly known Multiple Listing Service) suggested in response to Councillor Saxe's question that he didn't think there had been an inordinate number of complaints to 311 regarding the frats. He also said that it was unsafe for MLS staff to investigate noise complaints without securing the protection of police officers. (No worries expressed about the safety of those actually attending the party.)

So here's the plan. We're asking neighbours to lodge a complaint with 311 every single time they are disturbed by a frat party. Don't give up. Don't despair. Just keep logging. Time after time after time. If the numbers pile up, our Councillor

will have more ammunition to bring to bear on the issue. And she's not one to give up.

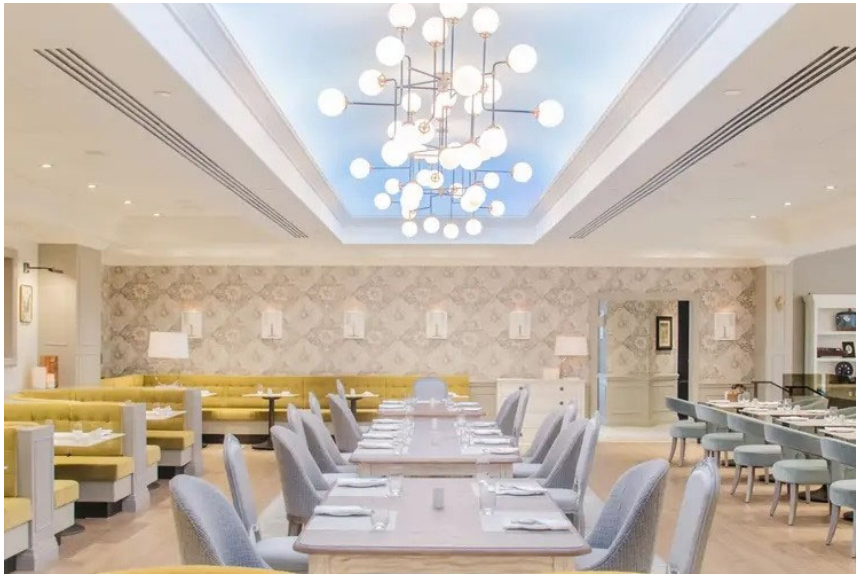


If you're wondering where to start, [make your complaint about a rave party](#). That should get the attention of MLS. And don't limit yourself to noise. Report any infraction, including unkempt properties, garage bins not being taken in, any indications of booze cans or fire/safety hazards. In addition, any younger members who attend these parties should contact police regarding anything untoward, including drinks spiked with date rape drugs. The City will only act if the evidence mounts up.

Notes and Queries

Meet 'n' Eat is a GO!

There was a flurry of RSVPs last week, and now we've opened a waitlist with Signatures in the Royal Sonesta for next Wednesday, February 7th. Yes. The idea of a Winterlicious ARA Meet 'n' Eat in the company of other Annexonians has clearly struck a chord. Fiona is currently liaising with Signatures to see if we can expand the table even further. So if you're keen to join the crowd, there could still be room. [Click here](#) to make your interest known, and she'll see what can be done. Bon Appetit!



Budding Has Begun

One of a gardener's great joys is to spot the first tentative emergence of snow drops and scilla and crocuses and all those promising early spring bulbs. But in January? Oh dear no. Unfortunately, a careful scan of gardens across the 'hood reveals hundreds of plants making an early appearance. Gardeners are advised to blanket these oh-too-soon arrivals in leaves or mulch to protect them against the inevitable storms of February. Fingers crossed these stirrings make it through to spring without too much loss or disfigurement.



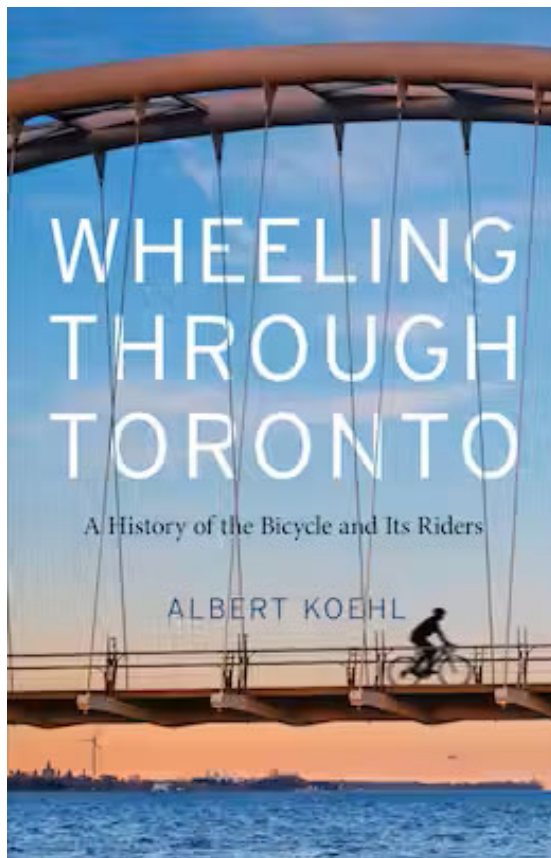
Pet Owners Alert

We've received reports of a pack of coyotes who have strayed from their base in the Nordheimer ravine to stroll down Davenport, checking out the local action. Four were spotted this past weekend loping along the pavement near the corner of Dupont and Davenport — destination unknown. But pet owners are advised to keep their dogs on a leash and their cats indoors lest they make easy prey. To learn more about how to respond to coyotes, [check the City's website](#) for helpful information. And remember, if you see a coyote, do not, for heaven's sake, run. You don't want to look like an edible treat. Instead, make some major noise to scare it away.



The Bicycle in Print

Past ARA Board member Albert Koehl has spent decades advocating for cyclists in this city. He's led attention-grabbing protests (remember Bells on Bloor?), written persistently to the press, and won awards for his stellar work and advocacy. Now we're delighted to report that Albert's book, *Wheeling through Toronto: A History of the Bicycle and Its Riders*, is being published by the prestigious University of Toronto Press, with a release date of this coming May. At 400 pages of painstaking research, the book offers a 130-year ride from the 1890s to the present as it captures Toronto's often ambivalent attitude to the two-wheeler. To reserve your own copy, [click here](#).



Reach for Those Ear Plugs

[Reka Sivarajah](#), Senior Community Liaison Officer with the TTC, has sent an alert regarding the imminent intensification of work on the Spadina Subway station. Heavy drilling and excavation are expected to begin as early as this week in order to build the elevator shafts on Lowther Ave (west of Spadina Rd). Estimated completion date — mid-March — followed by the completion of all excavation by mid-April, 2024. Full details are [available here](#). Hang in there. It's surely almost over!



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