

## UPCOMING

### MAY

- 6 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 8 TTC Board, 9:30 a.m.
- 9 Design Review Panel, 12:00 p.m., committee room 2
- 14-15 Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber
- 21 General Government & Licensing Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 22 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber, Etobicoke Civic Centre
- North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber, North York Civic Centre
- Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber, Scarborough Civic Centre
- Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 23 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 27 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 28 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- 29 Budget Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1
- Toronto Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m., committee room 3
- 30 Design Review Panel, time TBD, committee room 2

### JUNE

- 6 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1



# ONE-STOP SHOP



**Rob Jowett**

**A** new tool is available to help residents and community groups in the early stages of creating a community hub—a one-stop shop for addressing local needs and focusing advocacy.

The [Community Hub Development Toolkit](#), developed jointly by **Social Planning Toronto** and the **SPACE Coalition**, is intended to offer practical guidance to community organizers on how to create a hub. The community hub is a central point in a neighbourhood where residents access services, such as healthcare or legal aid, and space for local organizations such as cultural groups or residents' associations.

"This toolkit is supposed to be a practical guide for residents and community leaders who are interested in working on advocating for a community hub in their community," Social Planning Toronto research and policy analyst **Sharma Queiser** told *NRU*. "It was really to help people to go from having a living room chat about how

great it would be to have a hub in their community to actually learning how to work together in order to advocate for a community hub."

Specifically, the toolkit details the process of community organizing, the development of a vision for the hub and how to undertake an area assessment. It provides advice on issues such as consensus-building, meeting organization, data collection and research, and ways to access seed funding.

"For folks who haven't done this kind of work [community organizing] before, just getting a committee together is a big step. And so we wanted to make that easier, and the toolkit will help them do that," says **SPACE Coalition** co-chair **Susan Fletcher**. The **SPACE Coalition**

is a community hub advocacy group.

"Just getting started, finding the right people to get together, coming up with a vision, this is tough stuff because you have to think well into the future," she says. "No matter what kind of a hub you want and what kind of a setting it's going to be, whether it's in a church, a health centre, repurposed school, in an existing school, expanding a parks recreation centre... there's all kinds of other bureaucracies and rules and regulations that you have to follow. And in most cases you have to find some money to do it, and fundraising is never easy."

Neighbourhood hubs are seen as critical to helping residents organize and better address local needs and engage

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ■

Just getting started, finding the right people to get together, coming up with a vision, this is tough stuff because you have to think well into the future.

- Susan Fletcher

## NRU PUBLISHING STAFF

**Ian A.R. Graham**, Publisher  
iang@nrupublishing.com

**Lynn Morrow**, Editor  
lynnm@nrupublishing.com

**Rachael Williams**, Reporter  
rachaelw@nrupublishing.com

**Rob Jowett**, Reporter  
robj@nrupublishing.com

**Peter Pantalone**, Planning Researcher  
peterp@nrupublishing.com

**Jeff Payette**, Design/Layout  
jeffp@nrupublishing.com

**Irena Kohn**, Sales and Circulation  
irenak@nrupublishing.com

## NRU PUBLISHING INC

**SALES/SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
circ@nrupublishing.com

Annual subscription rate is \$409 +HST (ON).

Complimentary trial subscriptions are available.

Advertising rates available upon request.

**Novæ Res Urbis Toronto** is published 50 times a year and is not to be redistributed without the written consent of the publisher.

**Editorial Office**  
26 Soho Street, Suite 330  
Toronto, ON M5T 1Z7  
Tel: 416.260.1304  
Fax: 416.979.2707

**Billings Department**  
NRU Publishing Inc.  
PO Box 19595 Manulife PO,  
Toronto, ON M4W 3T9

ISSN 1918-7548

# ONE-STOP SHOP

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

in community-building, says **United Way Greater Toronto** neighbourhood initiatives director **Alex Dow**. The United Way operates seven community hubs in Toronto, and provides core funding to Social Planning Toronto.

“Hubs are a one-stop shop in terms of reaching services that meet identified needs by the community,” he says. “They provide space for residents to meet and engage to address

the changes and needs in their communities... The model is that they can be fluid in terms of the programs and services... [in order to be] responsive.”

Fletcher says the toolkit is meant to serve as a precursor to other tools available from Community Hubs Ontario, a provincially-operated website that helps organizers through the later stages of creating hubs, such as drafting a business plan. But she says she

is concerned the site maybe shut down due to funding cuts, and access to the information lost.

“I think it’s a completely valid and legitimate concern,” **The Lonsdale Group** president **Karen Pitre** told *NRU*. Pitre was the special advisor to Premier Kathleen Wynne on community hubs. She says the office was eliminated when the Conservative government took office in July 2018.

“[The toolkit is] absolutely a valuable tool... it’s not easy work bringing all these people together, so the more

collaboration an effort that can be brought to bear, the better,” she says. 🌸

# PROTECTING DWELLING ROOMS

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

homes, the typical rent would be higher than the mid-range rent level.

“This allows us to have a threshold for where above these rent levels, units or rooms would be exempt from following the policy requirements and we do that because there are certain types of rental housing or dwelling rooms that we don’t want to discourage from being developed,” said Rajakumar, including student houses and seniors residences.

But according to Goldstein, this exemption provides an incentive for landlords to raise

their rents to above the mid-range rent level to ensure the unit is not captured under the proposed amendment.

“Even if it’s a current landlord that in the future wants to sell their building, there would be less profits made and it would be less desirable to redevelop it unless they could show to the [buyer] that it wouldn’t be affected by the OPA because all of the current tenants are paying above mid-range rents,” she said.

Rajakumar explained that is an enforcement issue and it is something that is covered under the **Landlord**

**and Tenant Board** under the jurisdiction of the *Residential Tenancies Act* and is not something local planning policies can address.

“But it’s something that definitely needs to be improved in terms of tenants having better education of their rights and seeing more support provided to them to ensure that this doesn’t happen, but it’s not something a policy is able to address,” she said.

Another issue with the proposed OPA, according to Goldstein, is the trigger. These rental protections would kick in when the city receives a redevelopment application. But if the property owner wants to keep the existing building but increase the rents, there is nothing that would require municipal intervention.

“We’re calling it upscaling—

when you find ways to get rid of the tenants so you can raise the rents—and that does not require the involvement of the city to do that. You can upscale a building without needing a permit to do anything so the opportunity for the city to intervene and regulate somehow doesn’t really exist,” she said, acknowledging the need for public policy to maintain affordable rents on vacant units.

The city will consult on the draft before approving a final OPA. A statutory meeting will be held on May 28. 🌸