

Notes After Meeting of Subcommittee on Formalizing/Expanding the Group Sept 29, 2005

This evening's meeting on group expansion and formalization went really well. I think there was some really useful discussion, resulting in really useful plans. Matt, Marc, Rosanna, Bob and myself were there.

***** Upcoming plans for the next few months**

After a fair amount of discussion, we came up with a plan everyone was happy with to expand the group and get neighbours working together over the next few months. We'll do this in three steps:

1) An informal "meet your neighbours" night in November

We'll hold an event in November. We'll see if the Gladstone might donate a space. Maybe a late Sunday afternoon. It will be an informal event where people can meet their neighbours, and possibly learn a little about the residents group. If we can, we'll try and organize some casual activities to help people to get to know each other, and/or arrange for snacks. We will try especially hard to make sure that everyone who lives in the eligible area knows about it and feels welcome. We'll try and do invitations in Portuguese and maybe Vietnamese.

As part of the process of promoting the November meeting, we'll circulate fliers explaining a bit about the residents group. We'll especially invite people to help plan a spring block party. Maybe this can be part of the focus of the November meeting.

2) A large open residents group meeting in February

This will be a meeting whose main purpose will be to ratify a constitution and elect a committee of officers. We'll be very diligent about promoting this, to make sure that no-one who might be interested gets left out of the process.

3) A block party in April

In the spring, we'll hold a big block party. Our hope is that the party will get people out, and also that working toward the party can be a goal for people to be excited about and work on together in the intervening months.

A lot needs to be decided, of course. But it would likely be a day-time thing, very family-friendly, and not too noisy. There was talk about organizing yard sales, about a talent show, face-painting and an inflatable jumping-castle for kids, etc. Maybe a good activity for the November meeting would be some sort of forum where people can talk about what they'd like to see at this block party.

Everyone agreed it would be great to get neighbourhood businesses to help with donations and/or resources, but that we need to focus on making sure this remains a party for and by people who live in the neighbourhood and not a commercial endeavour.

Matt's found some great information about throwing block parties.

***** Membership eligibility and Geographic Boundaries**

We talked quite a bit, and, somewhat surprisingly, everyone present pretty quickly agreed unanimously on a set of boundaries. Everyone felt the boundaries should be kept small, both to keep issues focused, and, at least initially, to keep the logistics of the group manageable. We felt that a primary reason for the reason for the group's existence is the very rapid changes on Queen Street in our area, so it made sense to keep the boundaries close to Queen. Our neighbourhood seems to have natural boundaries at Dovercourt and at Dufferin, and, as these are already the boundaries of the riding, it made sense to use these pre-existing boundaries.

As an initial suggestion, we'd propose that full membership in the group be open to anyone who lives either:

- On Queen Street, between Dovercourt and Gladstone or
- On Northcote, Beaconsfield, or Lisgar, within 1 Block of Queen or
- On the West side of Dovercourt, within 1 block of Queen. (The east side is not Ward 18)
- (Does anyone know where the Western boundary of our Ward is on Queen?)
- On Abell Street. (Just #48?)

Of course, to be a member, you need to be a resident at the address in question. Property owners and businesspeople are welcome to join only if they are also residents.

If you have comments or concerns about these boundaries, please let me know.

**** Next Steps**

Matt will take the lead role in organizing the meet-your-neighbours night. Rosana offered to help with organizing. Bob is interested in helping develop ideas for how to get neighbours to actually meet and talk to each other once they are there. (Sam may also work on this?)

Within a week from today, Matt will find out what he can about getting a space for the event. Our hope is that the Gladstone might let us use the ballroom on a Sunday afternoon. At Matt's suggestion, Misha will help make sure this work stays on deadline.

**** Want to help?**

If you are interested in helping out, please let me know.

**** Next Meeting: Oct 27**

We scheduled a meeting for Thursday, Oct 27, at Bob's place (9 Beaconsfield) at 8:00. This meeting will be specifically about next steps to formalize the group, and the meet-your-neighbours night. It's expected that between now and that meeting, we'll be in touch by phone and email to keep the project moving along.