Bloor Street East Neighbouhood Association (BENA)
Ravine Walk and Meeting
September 29, 2016
<u>Meeting Notes</u>

In Attendance
City Representatives:
       Parks Ambassadors: Tory Ford, Cory Rutledge, Jamie Herring,
       Streets to Homes: Sue Goodfellow
       Transportation – Roads and Sidewalks: Edison Alexander
       Parks, Forestry & Recreation – Ravines and Watercourses: Dennis Kovacsi
       Councillor's Office: Tristan Downe-Dewdney

Property Owners:
       278 Bloor St E: Amber Tayor (Board Member for Walk only)
       300 Bloor St E: Martin Denheyer, John Burt
       350 Bloor St E Rogers Communications: Arlene Frank, Beverley Valley
       360 Bloor St E: Ari Soroka, Nancy Ross
       388 Bloor St E: Linda Brett
       402 Bloor St E TD Bank: Bryan Symington

BENA: Linda Brett and John Burt

Purpose of the Walk and Meeting
All attendees were advised the walk and meeting that followed was to familiarize all with the conditions and challenges of the Rosedale Valley Ravine as it pertained to upkeep and safety of property. All were provided the City's current map of property lines. The intent was to give guidance as to what can be done to protect the properties from such things a graffiti, trespassing, break-ins, illegal activities. The walk was prompted by the unprecedented amount of activity in the ravine resulting in increased noise, encampments resulting in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, breached fences and others.

City Staff Reporting
- Since 2003 Parks Ambassadors work with Streets to Homes and are active in the Rosedale Ravine
- Ravines are magnets for the homeless and illegal activities with certain spots considered anchor spots
- Demographics of the population in the ravine is diverse - includes mentally ill, those with substance abuse, various kinds of drug activities and other illicit activities
- Population tends to be very persistent and revisit often
- Parks Ambassadors and Streets to Homes are continuously active in the Ravine
- An encampment may appear to be the same individuals, however inhabitants are often changing
- Staff have noticed a spike in activity throughout the City in 2016
- City Staff do three sweeps of the Ravine a year, Spring, Summer and Fall
- No cleanup in done in the winter, areas are marked and identified for attention in the spring

- Sweeps are ideally done in conjunction with various departments including Toronto Police Services, Streets to Homes, Transportation and Parks, Forestry & Recreation
- Resources are limited with Transportation and PF&R having skeleton staff in the winter
- Safe needle removal is to be co-ordinate through Public Health as reported by Streets to Homes
- Streets to Homes are a reactive resource which act on an "invitation to assist" basis

Resources available to Residents and Property Owners
- Immediate service issues should be reported to 311, best method is email with a service number issued to the reporting person
- 311 Reports should be detailed enough to identify where issue is located and the type of issues an accompanying picture is also helpful in order for the dispatcher to deploy the correct City Department
- Resources and budgeting are allocated on a statistical basis. 311 calls are logged and counted
- Escalation to Staff direct and/or the Councillor's office only done after 311 reporting. Service numbers issued by 311 required for further investigationIllegal activities to be reported to the Police (53 Division) either through the general number or 911 if warranted. Daily resources are allocated based on statistics on call ins as well
- Police have permission and ability to "trespass" on the City's property, however a Authorization Form must be completed by owners of Private Property (form was provided)
- Property owners may take whatever measures it sees necessary to protect their own property, however if they have an encampment on their property they also may avail themselves of the resources of Streets to Homes to attempt to humanely remove the offending individual

Property Lines, Responsibility for Property and Possible Personal Protection
- The property lines may not equal responsibility. Many lease back and/or other agreements may existence in various states of valididty. Some property may appear to be that of the City's however may be abandoned property.
  - **Action** - City Staff to provide to the Councillor's office a mapping of responsibilities that may or may not match the property lines map distributed
- Lighting, cameras, fences all provide certain protections but none of them are a definitive protection. Eg. Lighting may discourage certain activities but may be a delight to the drug dealer for counting his money as an example. Cameras in and of themselves do not provide much of a deterrent for certain segments of the ravine population, however can be useful in identifying persons
- Fencing provides some deterrent but not a definitive solution
  - **Caveat on type of fencing and/or conditions on private property** – The property owner is liable for any injury caused on their property regardless of the status of the injured person including a person committing an illegal act
  - Councillor Wong-Tam's office to provide the by-law and permit requirements for fencing for those who are considering fencing
- **Best defense** – Make the property as uninviting as possible. Level ground - place stones or other materials to make it uneven, continual patrols of your property. The Ravine population will move around to the area of least resistance, if yours is inhospitable they will go somewhere else
- It is difficult to defend against graffiti, however murals on appropriate walls have proven to reduce the incidents

Next Steps
Staff is to provide Councillor Wong-Tam's office with the legal responsibilities for upkeep for all the properties from 278 Bloor Street East to the Sherbourne Bridge. Councillor Wong-Tam will provide BENA and/or the property owners where appropriate the following:

- Legal responsibilities of the Ravine properties to the transportation road allowance
- By-law requirements and permit requirements for fencing of the private properties