



46 more affordable housing spaces, 6



Building food access for all, 5

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



Sparks Street was packed on Sunday, June 5, as Ribfest brought the smell of BBQing meat wafting across downtown. Kevin McHale, executive director of the Sparks Street BIA, said that this was the first large event on Sparks Street since the start of the pandemic. Vendors and businesses on the street were very pleased at the turnout for, and revenue from, the five-day (June 1-5) event, he said, although he didn't have actual numbers. The event was run by the BIA and was not connected to other city ribfests or to trucker convoy supporters. The BIA is planning to continue running large-scale events like Ribfest; the next is on Canada Day, when buskers perform on the street. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

LRT riders may finally get answers this month with provincial LRT commission



Justice William Hourigan is chairing the commission of inquiry and told citizens up front that he wanted to hear from them. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

Alayne McGregor
Ottawa's citizens are finally starting to learn how our light rail system went off the rails, and can expect to learn much more in the next two weeks. The provincial commission of inquiry into the LRT, chaired by Justice William Hourigan of the Ontario Court of Appeal, began its formal hearings June 13. As *The BUZZ* went to press, the first week of the hearings had already produced some interest-

ing disclosures:

- the total project budget was set early and the project was designed to meet that preliminary number
- the Alstom train for Ottawa was a newly adapted design based on unusual city requirements for an LRT vehicle
- the train on which it was based had not been run in the required winter temperatures
- Ottawa's LRT was the first time a private-public partnership (P3) model, in which the private partner undertook part of the financing, was used for a municipal LRT project in Ontario.

Still to come on the witness list are Brian Guest of the consulting firm Boxfish (June 27), former OC Transpo general manager John Manconi (June 28), city Transit Commission members Catherine McKenney, Allan Hubley, Sarah Wright-Gilbert, Diane Deans (June 29), and Mayor Jim Watson (June 30), as well as representatives of Alstom, the Rideau Transit Group, the city, and more.

Before the formal hearings started, the commission held two meetings in late May to ask the public what they wanted to learn from the investigation. Hourigan told the audience that he wanted to know how the LRT problems impacted them and what they thought the commission should focus on.

"The report is a report of the people of Ottawa. We're all ears."

continued on page 7 "LRT riders"

New NCC consultation forum wants you to prove your identity

Alayne McGregor

Your full name. Date of birth. Gender. Full address. Email. Home and mobile phone numbers. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn handles. And the geolocation of your computer.

A new public consultation platform just adopted by the National Capital Commission (NCC) is asking for all that information as part of registering to comment on upcoming NCC projects. Is it overkill?

On June 6, the NCC announced it was "improving the way we do online consultations" by using PlaceSpeak, "a platform with a broad online toolkit and opportunities for collaboration."

PlaceSpeak, whose headquarters are in Vancouver, requires registration in order to comment on its consultations. According to its website, it also can restrict consultations to certain groups of people – for example, only those in a

certain neighbourhood.

A personal name – not an organizational name like a community association – your email, and your home address are required to register. The system also requires geolocating your computer to verify your address.

Colleen Hardwick, the founder and CEO of PlaceSpeak, told *The BUZZ* that other information is optional, but could be used as demographic information. The PlaceSpeak FAQ says that phone numbers may also be used to verify registrations, as could the GPS from your mobile phone.

Bryan Short, OpenMedia's digital rights campaigner, questioned why information like gender, birthdate, phone numbers, or precise geolocation was even required. Is this information necessary for the consultation, he asked.

"What's the risk if you give them this information?"

continued on page 5 PlaceSpeak

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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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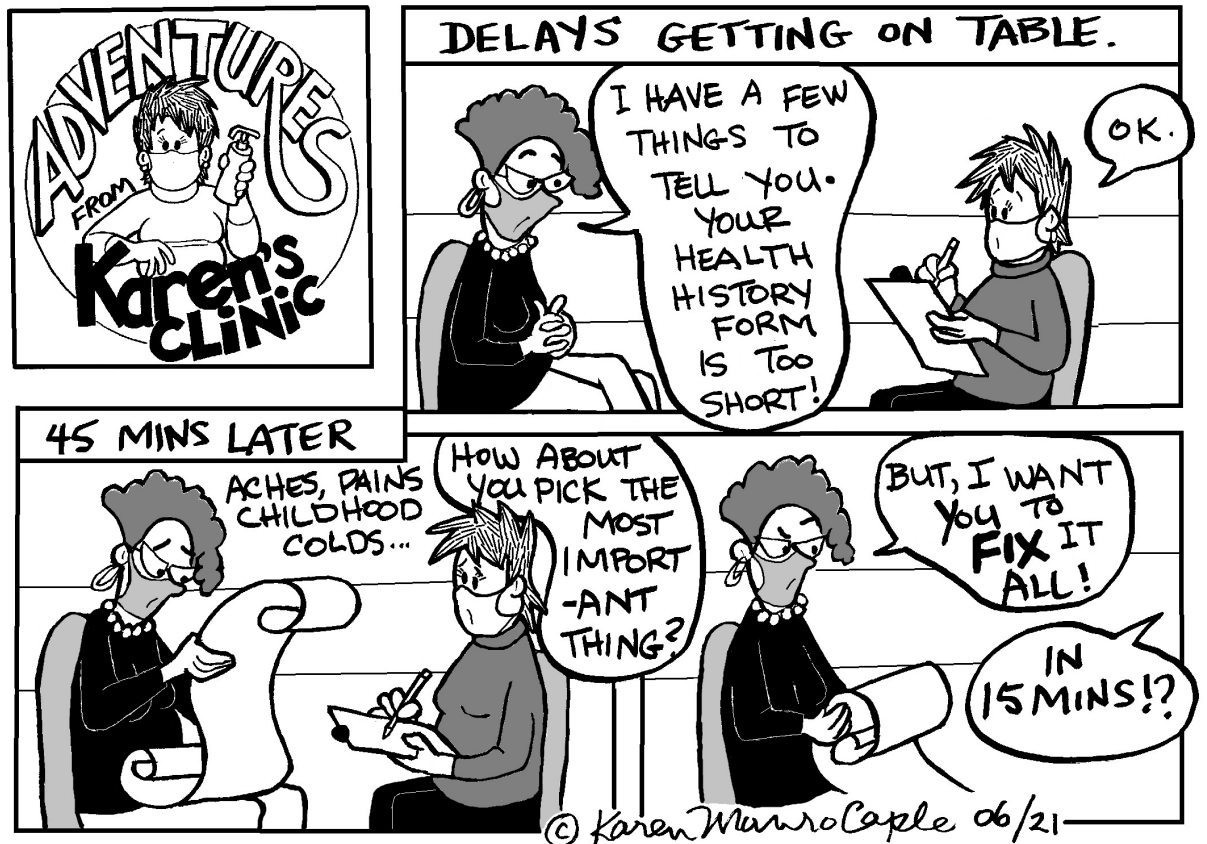
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The Lighter Side of the Pandemic, by Karen Munro-Caple



The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: PWDs need support during weather events

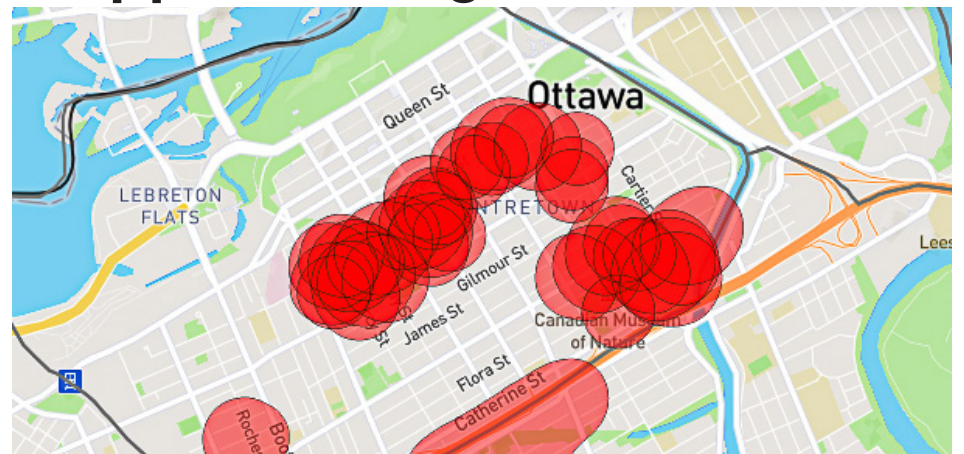
Ryan Lythall

On May 21, Ottawa, as well as parts of Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec, was hit by a significant storm. Tens of thousands of people were left without hydro, trees were destroyed and several lives were lost. Weeks later, hydro workers, the NCC, roof repair workers and residents are still working hard to clean up damage caused by that storm.

Centretown was no exception. I've seen fallen trees near sidewalks and pictures on social media of trees that crashed into roofs. Fortunately, aside from my lights flickering for several minutes, the power in my building didn't go out. I'm incredibly thankful that I was somewhere safe and that nothing happened to me.

Unfortunately, I can't say that all people with disabilities (PWD) in Ottawa were safe and had electricity. In the days following the storm, stories emerged that the storm had impacted several PWD. One of these stories was about a person in the west end of Ottawa who was trapped alone in her apartment for 10 days following the storm. The building where she lives lost power. Without a generator in place, the elevators weren't working. But, with help from friends and her medical team, she overcame a situation that could have been easily avoided.

For a PWD, a power outage can be devastating. As a ventilator-dependent person, I wouldn't be able to breathe without power. I have several fully charged batteries, which would get me through at least 12 hours. But, once those 12 hours are up, I would need to go to a hospital or an emer-



Hydro Ottawa's outage map of Centretown on May 22, 2022 at 2:25 p.m.

gency storm shelter.

During the 2003 blackout, I needed to go to a shelter and I was able to get Para Transpo to take me to the Ottawa Hospital General Campus. When I arrived, the ER was filled with others needing power for their medical and mobility devices. Several hours later, Para Transpo returned to take us all to the Orleans Recreation Complex.

When we arrived, cots were set up and food was available. Being transferred from my wheelchair to a cot was both painful and dangerous. If I recall correctly, there were no portable lifts available. For me to lay on the cot, my personal support worker (PSW) and another

person had to manually lift me onto a cot that was very low to the ground.

I've put together a list of areas where I think the city needs to do more to be prepared for the next storm or massive power outage:

- All apartment buildings/long-term care residences should have backup generators. No doubt, depending on when a building was built, there would likely be different requirements for buildings.
- Para Transpo vehicles should be made available and public transportation should be FREE during a storm or mass power outage. For a PWD, the last thing we want is to be stranded far away from home, or even at

home.

• All emergency storm shelters should be equipped with mechanical lifts and proper beds so that PWD feel as safe and comfortable as possible.

As I've written many times over the past three years, the City of Ottawa needs to do more for people with disabilities. Our needs are often pushed aside, or ignored. We're treated as third-class citizens in a city considered by some to be world class. During an emergency, PWD and others who are vulnerable should be viewed as a priority instead of being forgotten.

Follow Ryan on Twitter: @rolling_enigma

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It takes a community!

The BUZZ asks and Somerset Ward candidates respond

On October 24, voters in Somerset Ward will elect a new city councillor for 2022-26.

In each issue up to the election, *The BUZZ* will ask the candidates running in this ward one question about city issues important to this ward. If you have suggestions for future questions, email editor@centretownbuzz.com.

This month, we ask:

Should all the decisions on the Lansdowne Park 2.0 plan have been delayed until the 2022-2026 City Council, or was it appropriate for council to approve the Lansdowne Partnership Sustainability Plan and Implementation Report and have staff start work on the plan now? Why?

Stuart MacKay

I believe that Ottawa City Council should have delayed the decision on Lansdowne 2.0 until the next term of council. This would have allowed a new council with fresh perspectives to take the next steps in revitalizing Lansdowne Park. Once again, important decisions were made behind closed doors rather than in the clear light of day, without the proper consultation and debate. Decisions like these serve only to increase distrust between the city and its citizens. The next city council must be upfront with transparency to renew accountability and rebuild trust when it comes to big projects like Lansdowne 2.0.

While there are several good ideas within the Lansdowne 2.0 proposal, I still have many concerns about the project. There will need to be a detailed study to examine the potential increase in traffic along Bank Street. We will also need to increase the frequency of OC Transpo routes 6 and 7 to make public transit a truly reliable option to get to Lansdowne. I will also push for increased tree canopy and seating around Lansdowne to make it a more appealing environment. I also have concerns that Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) have overestimated the retail potential within the proposed new development. Should I earn the privilege of being the next councillor for Somerset Ward, I will bring these concerns to the council table.

I want Lansdowne to succeed. I want its businesses to thrive. I want Lansdowne to become an actual community. And I want the

RedBlacks to win another Grey Cup. But Lansdowne will only succeed if it reflects the needs and desires of Ottawa residents. That means proper debate and consultation. In doing so, we can fix the mistakes of the past and create a Lansdowne finally worthy of our city.

Brandon Russell

Lansdowne Park 2.0 was rushed through council with little to no public input; that is a fact. I have been and will continue to be very vocal about the need for a more transparent city government, with councillors who listen to their electors. Transparency is a major part of my platform. When elected to city council I will do everything in my power to ensure the people of our community know what their government is doing with our tax dollars. The current city council has a challenging few months ahead, with the amount of change expected at City Hall in October. I can understand how some residents are concerned about this council making impactful decisions. I understand that concern; in fact, I share the same concern. However, I also understand the need for representation over the next several months until a new council takes their seats.

I encourage this council to look at the lasting repercussions of their actions, while being sure they aren't using their seats on council to further their own personal agendas or campaigns. I hope we can all count on our elected officials to continue to do what's best for the city, while I hope our elected officials continue to govern with our best interests in mind!

Ariel Troster

I agree with Shawn Menard that any decisions about Lansdowne 2.0 should be considered by the new city council after the municipal election. The future of public lands should be debated by the public.

I also think we need an overarching vision for the space that more effectively prioritizes pedestrians and community greenspaces, as well as deeply affordable housing. There could be a role for a genuine design competition for a project of this scale. The P3 model for Lansdowne has failed the city and led to increased costs. If we want to do this right, the city needs to take the time necessary to ensure excellence.



During Doors Open on June 4-5, residents could see all the options for the Block 2 development in a display at 191 Sparks, including this sculptural representation of the block in relation to Parliament Hill and downtown Ottawa. *Alayne McGregor/The BUZZ*

Block 2 redevelopment to bring more people to Sparks?

Alayne McGregor

Kevin McHale is looking forward to the Block 2 redevelopment, as much as anyone can look forward to a major construction project on their street.

McHale, executive director of the Sparks Street BIA, said his group was consulted before Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) undertook its recent competition to redevelop the block of Wellington and Sparks Streets between Metcalfe and O'Connor Streets. He said they were assured that the business/commercial nature of Sparks would not be affected. They were also pleased that the federal government had held a full-design competition to produce an architecturally memorable design for the block.

Last month, a federal-government-appointed independent jury picked a design for Block 2 by Zeidler Architecture in association with David Chipperfield Architects. The design preserves all the heritage buildings on the block, only demolishing the Fisher Building. It will extend the buildings upward and link them together in a new "net-zero" structure to provide meeting rooms and offices for both MPs and

senators. The design also features a People's Square linking the complex to the Parliamentary Lawn, an indoor garden atrium, and a forest garden.

The new complex will feature super-efficient building systems and a very tight overall building fabric to reduce energy and water usage. The garden atrium will provide a thermal buffer space like a blanket of air to protect the facades of the existing buildings from the harsh Ottawa climate, the architects said.

In the architects' presentation to the jury, Julia Gersovitz noted that the block "mediates between town and crown. Wellington Street has developed a formal character defined by highly ornamented polychromed individual buildings. In contrast, Sparks represents the vibrancy of a commercial street where storefronts are interspersed with bank entrances. The varying heights provide an interesting roofline and this, in turn, complements the picturesque profiles of the Hill. We continue this dynamic approach in the buildings on Sparks Street."

PSPC will be negotiating a contract and final price with the winning firm this summer/early fall. Construc-

tion is expected to start about 18 to 24 months after that and take two years.

McHale said he hasn't yet been given a timeline for construction, or been told how several businesses on the north side of Sparks in that block might yet be affected. In other construction projects, he said, PSPC has moved stores to other locations nearby for the duration of construction. Some might be able to remain with construction around them. He also expected that the construction area would be boarded off, with a fire lane provided to allow access to businesses on the south side of Sparks.

The development is expected to bring more federal employees to Block 2. The architects said their chosen design will create new mid-block passageways through the Block 2 complex from Wellington to Sparks. McHale said this might ame-

liorate the effect of the very long east-west blocks on Sparks. He hoped this would mean more employees and the public would exit onto Sparks Street rather than Wellington and patronize businesses there.

He was less sanguine about a proposal currently being considered by the federal and city governments to have the federal government take over Wellington and Sparks and have the section of Wellington in front of Parliament Hill closed to motor vehicle traffic. He noted that a City Council motion called for the BIA to be consulted before any decision is made.

McHale was concerned this would push more traffic, including truck traffic, onto other streets. As well, he said, the current closure of Wellington, along with the closures at the north ends of O'Connor and Metcalfe, has reduced Sparks Street's visibility to visitors.

MPP Joel Harden reelected

Alayne McGregor

Bucking the provincial Conservative victory, Joel Harden, NDP, was reelected as MPP for Ottawa Centre on June 2. He received 54 percent of the vote—30,311 votes, up from 29,675 in 2018—and more than twice the votes of his nearest rival, Liberal Katie Gibbs.

Voter turnout in the riding was 47.5 percent, down substantially from 61.2 percent in 2018. However, it was the highest turnout in the Ottawa area and substantially higher than the provincial average of about 43 percent.

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Skyline: St. Luke's Park explained



This was the photo of St. Luke's Playground used to illustrate Jacques Gréber's famous report of 1949 (NCC Library).

Robert Smythe

St. Luke's Park is only a snippet of a park. It's just a sliver of land between Frank Street and Gladstone Avenue but its history is connected to some important milestones in Ottawa's municipal past.

Several times it has survived close escapes when either City Council wanted to be rid of it, or traffic engineers and urban planners

have tried to devour it for other purposes.

First to explain St. Luke's Park's long and narrow dimensions: It's a shallow half-block that was cut short when the city's street grid ran into the city's southern boundary of the time.

More significant is the origin of its name. From 1898 to 1925 this property was the site of one of Ottawa's two Protestant hospitals and suitably named after St.

Luke the Evangelist, the patron saint of physicians and surgeons.

In the mid-1890s, a group of worthies, headed by lumber baron J.R. Booth, had been formed to secure suitable land and financing for the building. When the hospital was constructed it was literally at the edge of town, a common practice of the era because it was held to be healthier to be located away from city noise and fumes.

City Council came to see the property as a valuable public asset that could serve the surrounding neighbourhood with some urgently needed public space.

It wasn't for lack of trying. The Orphans' Home, being evicted from its building further north on Elgin Street entered negotiations with the city. This was followed by consideration of potential purchases by the cruelly named St. Vincent Home for Incurables and then the Perley Home for Incurables. After that the city's Board of Control made an effort to lease the building to the Dominion Government for the Geological Branch of the Department of Mines or other government purposes.

In 1929, in a last effort to deaccession the old St. Luke's the city offered the property for sale by tender. The three bids submitted were deemed insufficient. Later a revised tender to demolish the older parts of the hospital building was advertised. It was hoped that the 1912 wing could still be occupied for some useful purpose. None could be found and the rest of the building was taken down that same year. During the demolition workers uncovered the original cornerstone of 1897 with a time capsule encased in a glass bottle.

In 1930 the City of Ottawa decided to create what it would call St. Luke's Playground, but not before selling the northwest corner of the property at Frank and Elgin for a Cities Service gas station. This chunk of the block remains in private hands to this day.

For many years the so-called 'playground' was rough and provisional because for some time the city planners wanted to build a scenic drive through it which would then travel east on Frank to connect with the Federal Drive-way on the Rideau Canal. Several attempts to sell the land for building lots were also floated.

A softball diamond and a horseshoe pitch were among the park's chief attractions. In the mid-1930s the city's Playground Committee agreed to add a drinking fountain. At last in 1946-48 the city recognized

the area's acute lack of recreational space and proceeded with a field house, a play equipment area, and a wading pool. Ultimately a basketball court and lawn bowling green would be added. Tennis courts would complete the facilities but not before St. Luke's would undergo the greatest threat to its existence.

During 1965-67 traffic engineers announced that a new arterial road would slice through the lower part of the Golden Triangle linking to the new bridge planned for the Rideau Canal. Most of St. Luke's Park was to be sacrificed for this, with the rest to serve as a 50-car surface parking lot, or sold off for housing. The city's drastic plans were eventually killed off when the Centretown Community Association was formed, initially with the express intention of halting the new road - but soon creating the framework of what would finally be the Centretown Plan.

However after the apparent death sentence a search for a replacement park, to be called St. Luke's West, was soon begun. Properties on Waverley and Lewis west of Elgin Street were expropriated for what would eventually be known as Jack Purcell Park, in honour of the man who had been instrumental in fostering sports activities, especially hockey for local kids.

As a further tribute, the St. Luke's field house was officially renamed the Bethell Field House in memory of Lloyd and Shirley Bethell, the nearby Frank Street residents who shepherded the area's children through more recreation.

There are a few things that remain as tangible objects to the hospital's somewhat brief presence here. The house at 177 Frank Street which looks like a large family home was really built as the St. Luke's nurses' residence.

And, more recently, the parents who managed the park's playgroup reported that when digging for the footings of new play equipment they were surprised by enormous pieces of stone and cement - obstacles that had once been part of the hospital's deep foundations.

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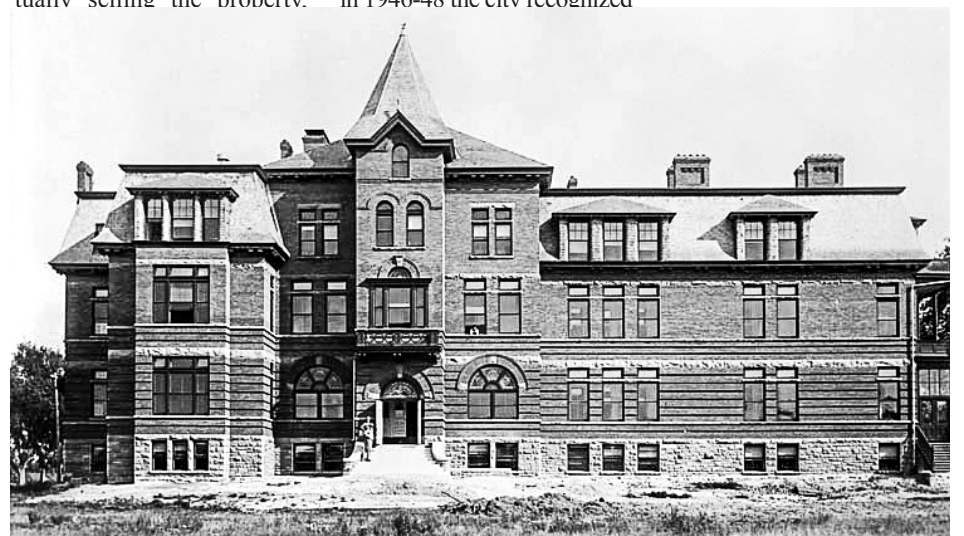
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The first phase of St. Luke's Hospital nearing completion, 1898. (Library and Archives Canada)

PlaceSpeak demands your identity

continued from page 1

Data breaches are inevitable, he said. “Researchers will say it’s not a matter of if this database gets breached. It’s more of a question of when it might happen.”

He said the NCC and PlaceSpeak should require the absolute minimum of information to allow people to participate in consultation while retaining some measure of control to avoid unfair influence by one side or another.

Hardwick said that PlaceSpeak had gone through “extensive and rigorous security testing,” and had not had a data breach.

Sharon Polsky, president of the Privacy and Access Council of Canada, said that most Canadians are taught from childhood to respect authority and fully fill out questionnaires. “If the question is posed, answer it.”

So even if a field is marked optional, many people will dutifully fill it out – with their real birthdate, their only valid email address, and other real information. Giving this information allows a company to create a profile of you matched with other publicly-available information and your responses to consultation questionnaires, she said.

Short was also concerned the use of PlaceSpeak could disenfranchise lower-income residents who only use library computers or don’t have computer access at all.

“Everybody should be able to bring their voices forward, so if the only way you can participate is through engaging on this digital platform and there’s no way for people to phone or write in with their comments, then

I’d say that they’re marginalizing a significant population of their community.”

Polsky was concerned that the geolocation requirement would prevent people who were travelling or students living away from home from participating in consultations that could still affect them.

Mario Tremblay, a strategic communications advisor at the NCC, said the NCC picked PlaceSpeak to make consultation “more accessible, interactive, and engaging for users.” The NCC’s first PlaceSpeak consultation – on the Sussex Courtyards Rehabilitation Plan – is now live.

Hardwick said the platform uses geolocation because, nine to 10 years ago, they found they were getting inquiries out of China using local addresses, “but we could detect that the IP addresses were in China. There are a variety of different ways to authenticate, because there is no silver bullet and, with authentication, you really need to triangulate.”

She is also a Vancouver city councillor. “We’ll get feedback on land use changes, for example, where developer companies will recruit people through communications firms to try to create the impression of a majority to try and skew what the outcome is going to be. This is why it’s really important to be able to ensure that you’re hearing from people in the affected area and be able to stand behind that for accountability purposes.”

She said that personal registration information will not be shared with the NCC.

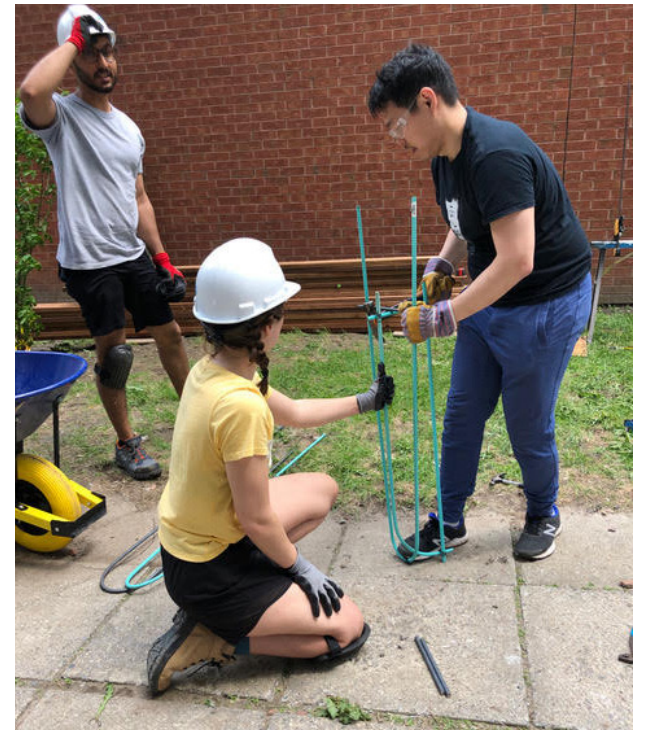
“Public Foods” fridge to provide food for all

Susan Palmai

Construction is now underway on an outdoor community fridge and pantry, at 415 MacLaren Street. Tentatively called Public Foods, it will serve the vulnerable in Centretown and the Glebe.

Many cities across the country have outdoor community fridges which operate under the mantra of “Take what you need – leave what you can”. Preventing food waste is one of the motivating premises of the fridge.

The communities of Glebe St. James United Church, Ottawa Community Housing, and Carleton University have joined forces to begin such a program in Centretown. Students in Carleton’s Master of Architecture program have designed and are building the structure



Architecture students work on the project. SUSAN PALMAI/THE BUZZ

as part of their studies. They are learning that not all their concepts and ideas can be easily be put into practice!

Arlington Five Café generously donated a fridge. Once opened, hopefully by late June, we will be looking for community collaborators: restaurants, grocery stores, individuals, to stock the fridge, check on the fridge daily, and complete

other tasks associated with our project.

If you have not yet seen the construction of the shed which will house the fridge, drop by 415 MacLaren Street and have a look.

On June 13 it looked like this! Progress!

If you would like to become a Fridge Checker or Contributor, contact palmaisusan@gmail.com

Analysis: Is Ottawa proposing a discredited criterion to evaluate road projects?

Alayne McGregor

Despite repeated studies saying that you cannot solve congestion through widening roads, city staff have proposed criteria for evaluating road projects that call for exactly that.

Until June 30, the city is asking for your comments on evaluation frameworks for road and for transit projects. The documents are available at engage.ottawa.ca in the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) section.

These frameworks are important because they will be used to determine which road and transit projects the city will plan and build in the next decade.

One of the proposed criteria for whether a road should be built or widened is “congestion reduction,” worth 20 percent of the score.

However, numerous academic studies have questioned whether widening will reduce congestion, arguing that more lanes will instead induce more people to use the road until the congestion soon reappears.

For example, a 2012 study published in the *Journal of the U.S. Transporta-*

tion Research Board concluded that investment in road capacity induces “additional growth in traffic (vehicle miles traveled). Indeed, a general failure of investment to alleviate levels of congestion is found.”

Councillor Catherine McKenney said they were “very disappointed that the city is taking a position that has been so readily disproved: increasing road capacity does not decrease congestion, but rather, through induced demand, increases pollution, accidents, and costs.”

They said they will raise this issue with other councillors and ask the city to “remove these erroneous statements.”

Other city criteria for road projects include cost, and whether the road will complete “the transportation network in new or growing areas.” The report notes that projects that “encourage people to make more or longer trips by driving” will score lower. Running through “key environmental areas such as wetlands, the Greenbelt, and urban natural features” will also downgrade a project.

On the other hand, projects that benefit “priority neighbourhoods with minimal negative impacts,”

“directly improve walkability and encourage Healthy Streets,” or are “integrated with transit infrastructure” will score higher.

The framework separates road projects into two categories: new roads and road widenings; and complete street modifications to existing roads to better accommodate sustainable modes in support of intensification and modal shift.

But it says that the projects in each category will only be assessed relative to other projects in the same category “to account for the

No cars this summer on the Driveway - and permanently?

Alayne McGregor

For the first time, the Queen Elizabeth Driveway (QED) will be car-free 24 hours a day this summer – a possible indication of more to come.

From Canada Day to Labour Day, the driveway from Somerset Street West to Fifth Avenue will be reserved for active transportation: walking, cycling, scootering, rollerblading, or exercising animals. Unlike previous years, cars will not be allowed in at night.

Then, until October 10 (Thanksgiving), the driveway will be reserved for active transportation on weekends from Saturday at 8 a.m. through to Sunday at 8 p.m.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) said that the car-free roads are “a great way to experience the beauty of the National Capital Region in a fun, safe

and environmentally friendly way.” It will also offer its regular weekend bike days until Thanksgiving on the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway and the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Parkway.

Parkways for People (P4P) has been pushing for a more permanent removal of cars from the driveway. It said it was pleased that everyone would have “the freedom to enjoy some of the most beautiful greenspace in Ottawa.”

“However, we really feel that the full length of QED should have been included in the program and that it should be made permanent. This is, after all, public land and should prioritize people over private motor vehicles,” said P4P co-lead Erin Maher.

“Waterfront land such as the QED is the jewel in the region’s crown, and we should be using this space for more than just moving

ing these projects include cost, city-building impacts (i.e., within walking distance of major destinations and not running through a wetland or flood plain), equity, ridership growth, schedule reliability, and travel time (on transit). They don’t include convenience, ease of use, or walking time to or between stops.

One issue not mentioned is whether the transit project involves widening a road, rather than reallocating road space to transit. Many times in the past few decades, transit lanes have widened arterials like Woodroffe Avenue;

and all we know about noise and air pollution, we need to stop catering to the ‘car is king’ way of thinking and start looking for opportunities to provide inclusive and robust active transportation infrastructure. This could be easily done along QED on a full-time basis which would furthermore allow better use of the surrounding park land. While we are seeing progress from the NCC and are thankful for this, more needs to be done to provide equitable and sustainable access to public lands and waterfront.”

Ottawa Centre MP Yasir Naqvi has been pushing for either the QED or Colonel By Drive to be permanently closed to cars, arguing that “we don’t need cars on both sides of the Rideau Canal.”

He told *The BUZZ* that he asked the NCC to collect data on how the QED is used this summer – and then to

when a separate busway was eventually built, the bus lanes were reallocated to cars.

The road and transit frameworks, “refined based on the results of public consultation,” will be used to develop the city’s Capital Infrastructure Plan, part 2 of the TMP, in 2023 and early 2024.

It will include a phased implementation plan for various levels of investment in road and transit projects, “considering the City’s GHG reduction targets, sustainable mode share targets, and affordability constraints.”

follow that up with further trial closures in the fall and winter to show how active transportation could be used on the driveway in all seasons, “since we are a winter city.”

Any decision would be made by the NCC in conjunction with Parks Canada. There is no timeline for this, but the NCC is open to the idea, he said. Since the pandemic began, the NCC has been closing the QED to traffic for varying periods, and attracting large numbers of users.

The Centretown Community Association (CCA) has also asked for cars to be removed from the QED; CCA President Mary Huang said they were “very pleased” that the NCC had listened. The association will be encouraging people to use the QED so that the NCC extends the pilot or considers a permanent closure.

Have a great summer!

The BUZZ is taking its summer break in July, and will be back with its next issue on August 19. If we get stories that can’t wait, we will update centretownbuzz.com.

Interested in contributing a letter, an op-ed, or an article in August? Email editor@centretownbuzz.com or call 613-565-6012 before August 8.

First a school, then offices, now affordable housing

Alayne McGregor

First a school and then an office building, the art deco heritage building at 44 Eccles Street will soon become an assisted living facility for women.

Starting this summer, Cornerstone Housing for Women will convert the building to provide 46 permanent single-occupancy units for women, with part of the rear parking lot being turned into a garden. Cornerstone Executive Director Sarah Davis expected the facility to open in fall 2023. It will be Cornerstone's fifth supportive housing building.

The conversion will be financed by a federal grant under the Rapid Housing Initiative. The grant was an-

nounced June 14 by federal Housing Minister Ahmed Hussen with Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi. Councillor Catherine McKenney was there in their dual role as ward councillor and city liaison for housing and homelessness.

The more than \$22.4 million grant will be divided between this project and two smaller ones in Vanier and Lowertown.

The building will provide deeply affordable housing for the most vulnerable and those at risk of homelessness. Hussen estimated rents would be on the order of \$400 to \$500/month. Davis said that each tenant's income and needs would be assessed to determine what rent they could afford. She

said the women will be selected from the city's housing registry, which currently has thousands of applicants.

A city staff report this month noted "the impact of steep increases in residential construction costs experienced by our not-for-profit housing partners over the past two years." When asked how the government would ensure the grant would remain sufficient, Hussen said there is some "limited flexibility" within the funding to take into account possible rises in labour costs or supply challenges.

The grant announcement ended with Naqvi, Davis, and McKenney going inside the building and taking some first swings at demolishing

interior walls for the renovation (see front-page photo).

The 3.5-storey building is in the city's heritage register. It was designed by Georges Lucien Émile Leblanc and opened in 1936 as École St. Dominique.

Lost Ottawa said it was the primary school for francophone Catholic girls in LeBreton Flats and Rochester-Districts and remained a school at least into the 1970s.

It was then converted into offices, including for the Law Society of Upper Canada. Naqvi said that, 23 years ago, he spent four months in the building taking courses for his bar exam.



44 Eccles Street as it currently appears. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Plant Pool RA offers seniors drop-in program

Julie Houle Cezer

The Plant Pool Recreation Association (PPRA) has organized and is hosting a Seniors 55+ morning program, sponsored by the Ottawa Community Foundation. The program will run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in July and August from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m. There's no charge and seniors can just drop in.

The morning starts with age-appropriate warm-ups, followed by standing and sitting exercises that gently reawaken muscles while challenging everyone. Water and refreshments are provided and everyone is encouraged to take frequent breaks as needed.

There will be two guest teachers: Shara Weaver and Liz Winkelaar from Propeller Dance, who will co-teach four Thursdays on July 21 and 28, and August 4 and 11. Both instructors will bring their extensive teaching experience, creativity and sensibility to teach new skills in standing and seated movement that can easily be integrated into daily routines.

The Ottawa-based Pro-



Ample quiet time for conversation, board and card games follows morning warm-up, exercise and refreshments. (PPRA) peller Dance, a professional company of dancers of all abilities, is recognized throughout Canada for both its innovation in creation and teaching methods. Both Shara and Liz are Artistic Leads who create, perform and teach integrated dance. For more information, see: www.propellerdance.com.

There will also be recreational activities such as table tennis, badminton, beanbag toss, ball games or croquet to choose from. There's ample time for restful activities such as card or board games, puzzles or quiet conversation with a new friend or two.

An intergenerational team of staff will be on-site to welcome and support everyone throughout the morning. They will want to hear about seniors' preferences and will make every effort to accommodate these needs. COVID-19 safety is not forgotten: masks and hand sanitizer will be provided for all participants.

For more information, see plantpool.org or email plantpoolrecreationassociation@gmail.com.

Julie Houle Cezer is a retired dance professional and movement facilitator for the Plouffe Park program.

Celebrating community resilience

P. Marsden-Dole

This month, Compassionate Ottawa, the City of Ottawa, and community partners are celebrating the resilience of the Ottawa community during the pandemic and working to restore community spirit through a series of neighbourhood events.

Starting with a kickoff at City Hall on June 11, this month's events have been spread around various neighbourhoods in Ottawa. In the mayor's words at the kickoff, the events are intended to revive community spirit in rebuilding community connections.

The events honour and

support many individuals and families who have suffered serious illness, job losses, caregiver fatigue, isolation, and the deaths of family and friends during the pandemic.

The idea is to publicly recognize what it means to have come through the worry, stress, isolation and losses we have shared with family, friends and neighbours since March 2020. The events are also a thank you to those who stayed on the front lines to keep us alive, healthy, safe and fed, and help us begin to reflect on what we have learned and might imagine as our future coming out of this experience.

One such event was an

evening with Dr. Allan Kellehear on the subject of *Dying, Death, Loss and Caregiving Affects Us All* at the Carleton Dominion Chalmers Centre on June 21. For more events, see togetherottawaensemble.ca.

Compassionate Ottawa is part of a global movement to support communities to become more compassionate. For more information, see compassionateottawa.ca.

The Together Ottawa Ensemble, offered by Compassionate Ottawa, is a citizen-led movement that works to change the way we think about living well, dying, death and grief. It helps strengthen people's capacity to care for each other in times of serious illness and loss.

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LRT riders raise questions & problems for inquiry commission

continued from page 1

Among the issues raised were system reliability, poor station design, train overcrowding, lack of quality, the P3 model, and fares that were too high.

Many of the speakers concentrated on root causes. Ken Rubin, for example, blamed “shoddy planning” and “low-quality products” for the debacle. He called for the city transit commission to be shaken up with “new, less compromised” members, a new management system to handle the broken relationship with RTG, and a new maintenance company. He also said there should be greater transparency on P3 projects like the LRT.

David Jeanes said the LRT’s specifications should have been open to the public so they could see what was being bid on and possibly avoid the problems caused by untested designs and an unnecessary requirement for low-floor vehicles. Similarly, the LRT’s system performance should be reported publicly. He said the system suffers from salt damage, excessive vibration and noise, and too-sharp curves, and needs more trains and more rail crossovers.

Georges Lafreniere said city councillors weren’t given enough information in order to properly decide on the \$2.1B project, and noted that the city was hostile to his efforts to try to get more information.

Sam Hersh called out the role of Brian Guest and a possible conflict of interest with Guest’s relative in the mayor’s office.

Luka Yaskiw asked why Alstom didn’t recommend a train more suited to the needed metro service, rather than a light rail vehicle better suited to a tramway. He questioned the quality of the construction, noting stations still smell of sewage, and there’s visible rust on a supporting beam at Tunney’s Station and frequently pooled water on that station floor.

Toussaint Smits compared his experience with high quality in the aviation industry to the substandard materials in the LRT. He was appalled that it took a five-week shutdown to respond to a single defective gearbox which should have been fixed in one to two days. He called out the arrogance of the transit commission chair for making “ridiculous and empty statements.”

Jonathan McCoy noted that the open-air LRT stations were freezing in the winter and let in rain in the summer, with slippery stairs and not enough elevators.

Reliability was a major issue. John Redins, a board member of Ottawa Transit Riders (OTR), said Ottawa’s transit system already had problems pre-LRT, and when the LRT failed, the whole system became extremely fragile as buses and drivers were diverted to R1 service from regular routes.

Evan Saslove said he used to take one bus to the University of Ottawa; with the LRT, he never knew if he could get to class on time. Once he could not even exit the train at the university because it was so packed.

Victor Mitev recounted how he was forced into the road at Hurdman Station in October 2019, because the passenger bus platforms were so overcrowded. He said the system seemed to be designed by someone who didn’t understand intermodal transportation and how to properly handle transfers.

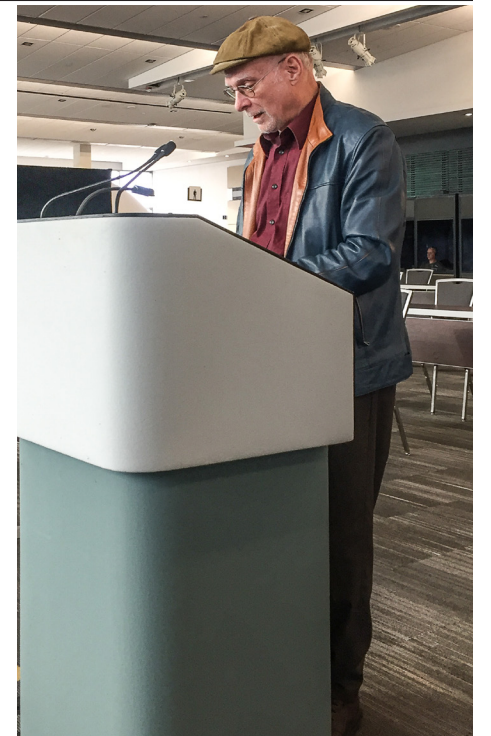
OTR board member Laura Shantz called for a transit system “that we can rely on.” She pointed out that buses so often don’t show up that it’s better to pay cash than use Presto because at least with cash you have a paper transfer to argue that you shouldn’t have to pay twice for your ride. Many bus routes were changed or cut to force people to use the LRT even though they were happy with the existing routes, she said.

The hearings will continue every weekday until July 7, with the exception of Canada Day, running from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day. They are being held at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law.

While that room is only open to the commission, witnesses, and lawyers, the public can watch the hearings via livestream in English, French, or both, in large auditoriums near the hearing room on the third floor of Fauteux Hall (57 Louis Pasteur).

The livestream for the hearings will also be available on [the commission’s website](#) in English and French, and it will be broadcast on Rogers TV, channels 470 in English and 471 in French. You can also watch any of the previous days of the hearing via webcast on the commission website on [the Meetings Schedule page](#).

The commission’s final report is due at the end of August but Hourigan said it may be extended into the fall.



Ken Rubin blamed the LRT problems on shoddy planning and low-quality products. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

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Children had the chance to play in the dirt with plants at the CCA Gardening Festival in Dundonald Park on June 11.

JACK HANNA/THE BUZZ

Anti-racism group wins award for grassroots work

Alayne McGregor

An incident on May 31 in which an elderly Chinese woman performing tai chi in Dundonald Park was confronted by an Ottawa police officer is an example of the continuing need for anti-racism education, according to Brenda Knight. Knight is the founder and chair of the Anti-racism working group of the Centretown Community Association (CCA). It's the only such group in an Ottawa community association, and its work was recognized with an award this month.

On June 15, the Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa (FCA), the umbrella group of local community associations, gave the group its 2022 Achievement Award, saying it was "an example of a grass-roots effort to confront an important problem in our community."

The group was formed two years ago to work towards increasing awareness and promoting the understanding of the trauma caused by systemic racism, hate crimes and violence directed towards the racialized community.

Knight was pleased with the award. Racism is a topic that people don't like to talk about, she said, "and the mere fact that it's being acknowledged and that there's a lot of people that know

we're doing the best we can to try to bring about change was a good thing.

"We have a lot of work to do. And I think that if it's acknowledged maybe that will give people a little bit more initiative."

The use of Dundonald Park has caused divisions within the community, Knight said. She said she was approached last year and told that the working group had to "clean things up and get these people out of the park."

"I'm like, no, we all have the right to the park. We're in the middle of COVID right now. These people at the park, there was no place for them to go."

The May 31 incident began with a phone complaint to the police saying the elderly woman had a long sword. It turned out to be plastic and collapsible. Knight thought the incident could have been avoided if the community police officer who knew regulars in the park had been called.

She said this could be an opportunity for the group to educate people on who to call other than the police when there are concerns or conflicts in the park, much like their existing flyer on how to get help for the homeless.

The committee is also working to dispel concerns about the John Howard Society's supportive housing for

homeless indigenous women at 500 Lisgar Street (now under construction: [see the story in the June 2021 BUZZ](#)). Knight pointed out that the residence will provide 24/7 support for the women to put them on a better path, including coaching them on preparing for job interviews.

Knight said she was particularly proud that her group persuaded the CCA board to submit a motion to City Council to redirect funds from the city police budget to social services such as community health centres. "That took a lot of work!" She said, however, that "I'm not one that's going to say 'Defund the police.' We need the police."

In April, Michelle Hurtbise from the Centretown Community Health Centre talked to the working group about rethinking safety in Ottawa and redirecting funds to social service agencies. "There's a lot of intersectionality between the anti-racism working group and the [CCA] housing affordability group because the demographics of many of the people who are homeless tend to be from the BIPOC community."

Housing affordability will continue to be a focus for the group, Knight said, including in the upcoming city election. They're looking at providing a list of points for residents to raise with candidates at the door.

She also hoped to reach out to other community associations to work together on anti-racism education.

"I'm very firm that our role is just to increase awareness, to educate, and sometimes when you're talking to people, they're going, 'Whoa, I didn't know that.'"

CCA report

Jack Hanna

Award acclaims CCA's Anti-racism Group

CCA's Anti-racism Working Group has received the 2022 Achievement Award from the Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa (FCA). The award citation states this is "an example of a grass-roots effort to confront an important problem."

FCA noted that the CCA group works "to combat racism, including hate crimes, racial discrimination, harassment, and other individual or systemic-racism issues" and supports "BIPOC and other racialized communities."

The CCA group has wrestled with difficult issues, hosted a series of talks by experts, and advocated on matters such as policing and housing. The award was presented June 15.

Farmers market on Sunday morning

The Elgin Street farmers market in Boushey Square at Elgin and Waverley Streets, is now open every Sunday morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. all summer and into the fall.

The market, a CCA initiative, offers fresh produce, including vegetables, fruits, eggs and honey, much of it organic. There are local craft



bread and beers, as well as prepared foods, especially Lebanese and Italian dishes, and relishes and pickles. There are also vendors offering handmade soaps, lotions and candles.

New this year is a mushroom block to grow fresh mushrooms in the kitchen, Persian carpets, or paw balm for the pet dog.

Open canal roadway to walkers and cyclists

Starting on Canada Day to Labour Day, the Queen Elizabeth Driveway (QED) will be closed to cars.

The CCA wants the NCC to go further and permanently make QED a grand promenade for pedestrians and cyclists. It argues the west bank of the Rideau Canal can be a magnificent park, open to people, events and pop-ups.

New skyscraper at Kent and Gilmour

Taggart has applied to build a 34-storey skyscraper in the block on the east side of Kent Street between Gilmour and MacLaren, which is seven times the allowed zoning.

This mammoth building,

is permissible under a loophole in city policy called the landmark building policy. The loophole allows a developer to utterly ignore height restrictions in return for creating a building of exceptional, or "iconic" architectural design.

The CCA will be considering this proposal extensively. To get involved contact: jack.2014@icloud.com.

Stop idling vehicles

CCA's Climate Change Working Group has teamed up with the Glebe, Vanier and Hintonburg community associations to submit a detailed brief to the city about updating and tightening the anti-idling bylaw.

During the three-week occupation by the Freedom Convoy last winter, Centretown residents experienced round-the-clock idling of hundreds of big parked vehicles. Residents worried about the health consequences of breathing fumes from these idling trucks and cars. The CCA argues that vehicles should not sit idling unnecessarily, burning fossil fuels and spewing hazardous fumes into the air.

MP report: Apply for Canada Summer Jobs

Yasir Naqvi

Finally, summer is here and I look forward to meeting with constituents, joining community events and hosting a few of my own! We all deserve a break after a difficult start to the year and I look forward to connecting with you over the coming weeks.

Earlier this month, I was thrilled to join Parkways for People to celebrate the opening of Queen Elizabeth Driveway for active use! As Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, it is my priority to take bold action on climate change and help make Ottawa a greener capital. I have been working with the National Capital Commission (NCC) to ensure we have more active transportation in Ottawa. Whether it is Colonel By Drive or Queen Elizabeth Drive (QED), it is my strong belief that one side of the Rideau Canal should be reserved for residents to run, walk, bike and roll.

From July 1 to September 5, QED will be open exclusively for active use seven days a week. This summer's use will help the NCC to obtain important data to assess how we can enhance our parkways and build a greener city. From May 13 to Octo-

ber 10, Weekend Bikedays are back on QED. I am also working with the NCC to seek additional Bikedays on Colonel By Drive, as many residents have been advocating for this as well.

Carlington affordable homes

In more good news, Carlington Community Health Centre celebrated the grand opening of their renovated facility, which includes 40 affordable homes for seniors through a partnership with Ottawa Community Housing. I supported their rehabilitation project when I was MPP for Ottawa Centre. It's incredible to see the result of their hard work and determination! I look forward to continuing to support innovative projects and programs that offer inclusive and quality services to residents.

Summer jobs for youth

Every summer, young people in our community seek summer jobs. This year, 635 jobs have been approved through the Canada Summer Jobs program here in Ottawa Centre. The program offers quality and meaningful work experience for youth and provides them with an opportunity to develop and improve their skills. Organizations like the YMCA, the Boys and

Girls Club, Meals on Wheels, Parkdale Food Centre and many more will be able to hire young people between the ages of 15 to 30 this summer. For more information on how to apply, see: www.job-bank.gc.ca/youth for a full list of employers.

Finally, we know how challenging the last few months have been for our local businesses, especially in the downtown core following the 24-day illegal occupation. Our government quickly developed a program, the Downtown Business Relief Fund, administered through Invest Ottawa, to provide much-needed support to these businesses and over 500 businesses have benefitted from this funding. Our government will continue to support businesses, including the tourism sector at large, to revitalize our downtown core, restore vibrancy and promote economic growth in the National Capital Region.

My community office is located in Hintonburg at 404-1066 Somerset St. West. Please do not hesitate to reach out at 613-946-8682 or via email at Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca. Enjoy the summer with friends, family and loved ones. I hope to meet you soon.

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DCA: Canada Day crowd fears

Ed McKenna

Canada Day Celebrations

On Friday, July 1, Canadian Heritage will host Canada celebrations in LeBreton Flats Park. The DCA has some concerns about the impact on the Dalhousie neighbourhood, which were raised at its June 1 Board meeting.

On June 15, Councillor Catherine McKenney held a public meeting to hear these concerns. Some of these include traffic on Booth Street, street closures, garbage, the availability of public toilets, getting in and out of adjacent residential neighbourhoods, crowd management and access for fire and ambulance services. Many asked: What measures are being taken to ensure public safety for residents still recovering from the truckers' convoy?

City staff attended the meeting and provided helpful responses to residents' questions. Local roads will be closed beginning at 6 a.m. with festivities scheduled to end at 10 p.m.

Representatives from Bluesfest were also at the meeting as their event opens on July 7. A week before their event starts, they will fence nearby parks, pathways and

monuments, and help direct crowds away from the residences on Chaudiere Island and Lett Street.

The Ottawa Police Service did not attend this meeting. However, at a second public information meeting scheduled during the week of June 20, Councillor McKenney will ask for their participation, as well as representatives from the federal government.

In the meantime, Canadian Heritage is encouraging the public to "head to the surrounding streets" to view the Canada Day fireworks: www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/canada-day/capital-region/fireworks.html.

AGM follow-up

The DCA held its first regular meeting of the new board on June 1. Catherine Boucher has agreed to serve another year as president. The rest of the Executive includes Ed McKenna as vice-president, Ryan Turley as

secretary and David Seaborn as treasurer for 2022-2023.

Board member Joel Jacques set up the technology for the hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting. There were informative presentations from guest speakers Toon Dreessen, Angela Keller-Herzog and Sarah Button which are now available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YVgUwE764I.

Larch Street Apartment Building Public Meeting

The proposal to construct a 26-unit apartment building at 15, 17, and 19 Larch Street prompted a public meeting held via Zoom June 7. Following a presentation by representatives of the developer and architect, local residents asked why a large four-storey apartment building, which does not conform to the existing zoning bylaw, was being proposed for their neighbourhood.

In addition to members



DCA AGM speakers Angela Keller-Herzog, Sarah Button, and Toon Dreessen, with moderator Councillor Catherine McKenney and DCA President Catherine Boucher (l-r). MICHAEL POWELL/THE BUZZ

of the DCA, several residents from Preston side streets – Oak, Laurel and Larch – spoke about their efforts to support their community through years of work on the development of the Corso Italia Station District Secondary Plan. The plan calls for recognition of this area as one of special character, where "infill will be encour-

aged to ensure the unique quality and characteristics of the area remain."

Residents argued that this proposal is strikingly uncharacteristic of this area and simply ignores important provisions of the Corso Italia plan. In addition to its visual impact, the development is expected to produce traffic and parking prob-

lems, and is not viewed as providing "liveable, family-friendly housing options" as described in the plan.

The developer has agreed to re-examine the secondary plan but cautioned they "were not making any promises."

For more information about DCA meetings and Dalhousie area activities: president@ottawadalhousie.ca.



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trurealty.ca

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our annual general meeting is happening virtually this year!

Wednesday, June 29, 2022
5:30 pm

Register by June 22, 2022 by emailing info@swchc.on.ca
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What's on in Ottawa and beyond, this month and this summer

Tony Wohlfarth

Canada Day 2022

Canada Day activities have shifted to LeBreton Flats and Zibi from Parliament Hill for 2022. Featured Canadian performers include singer Chantal Kreviazuk and dancer Gurdeep Pandher. For an up-to-date list of the activities, see www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/canada-day/capital-region/cal-endar-events.html.

Tribeca Film Festival: *For Love & Legacy*

The Tribeca Film Festival was online this year from June 8-19.

My personal favourite was *For Love & Legacy*, a short 20-minute film, directed by A.K. Spandau, about a sculpture commemorating Dr. Huey P. Newton, erected in his hometown of Oakland, California. Newton was the co-founder of the Black Panthers and was murdered in Oakland in 1989. The film is a love story dedicated to Newton's surviving spouse, Frederika. The statue was dedicated in 2021 and can be seen at: hueypnewton-foundation.org/huey-newton-statue.

Kaepernick & America

Who is Colin Kaepernick? He's best known as a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, who took a knee rather than stand during singing of the US national anthem, as a protest against racial injustice and police brutality. This film traces Kaepernick's start as a biracial athlete growing up in Turlock, California. It then goes on to follow the long history of murders by police, which led to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) movement. Kaepernick & America was produced by Don Lemon (CNN) and stars two sports journalists: Pam Oliver and Steve Wyche. It's an important film about major events affecting both Americans and Canadians.

Both films formed part of Tribeca's Juneteenth section. Distribution plans for both films are pending.

Sydney Film Festival: *Fire of Love*

The Sydney Film Festival was held June 8-19 in Australia.

An international documentary film screening in Sydney was *Fire of Love*, directed by Sara Dosa. It's the story of two volcanologists, Katia and Maurice Krafft, who dedicated their lives to recording volcanic eruptions around the world. I saw the film at Sundance in January and was captivated by its raw beauty and power. Running time: 1h33min.

The Graduate—Then & Now

It has been 55 years since audiences were enthralled by *The Graduate*, directed by Mike Nichols and starring Dustin Hoffman and Anne Bancroft. It tells the story of the seduction of young Benjamin by Mrs. Robinson and his eventual rebellion against the path chosen for him and Robinson's daughter Elaine. It was a sensation when it premiered in 1967.

The Graduate is screening on June 29-30 at the ByTowne Cinema (325 Rideau). For showtimes, see www.bytowne.ca.

National Aboriginal History Month

The National Film Board (NFB) is marking National Aboriginal History Month by screening *Kimapiyitssini: The Meaning of Empathy*, directed by Elle Máijá-Tailfeathers. The film is set on the Blackfoot Confederacy in southern Alberta. A tsunami of opioid drug addiction sweeps across the Kainai First Nation and Esther, the director's mother, leads a team of physicians in seeking a solution.

This is not an easy film to watch. Tailfeathers warns us that several of the young people in the film have since died. The film is currently screening for free on nfb.ca. Running time: 2h4min.



Alessia Cara (photo courtesy Bluesfest)

Bluesfest 2022 (LeBreton Flats)

The capital will rock beginning July 7-17 as the annual Bluesfest returns to the lawn at Canada's War Museum for 10 days.

The 2022 edition kicks off with headliners Vanessa Collier, Alessia Cara, and Sarah McLachlan. The lineup also includes Jack Johnson, Sue Foley, Luke Combs, Alanis Morissette, Michael Franti & Spearhead, Alexisonfire, and The National.

Tickets and passes: ottawabluesfest.ca.

Reaching LeBreton Flats is easy. OC Transpo runs its regular service to Pimisi Station and will have special services on during the festival. Bluesfest also operates free valet bicycle parking on site.

National Arts Centre (1 Elgin)

The NAC will be home to diverse and high-profile music this summer. Jazz musicians start off the list with the **François Bourassa Quartet's** 25th anniversary concert (June 25), guitarist **Mary Halvorson** (June 25), trumpeter **Lina Allemano** (June 28), and bassist **Esperanza Spalding** (June 28). On June 30, AfroCuban pianist **Miguel de Armas** gives a free live concert with salsa vocalist Andy Rubal from a boat floating down the Rideau Canal.

Singer **Judy Collins** takes the stage on July 14 and award-winning indigenous writer **Tomson Highway** holds a musical and literary celebration with many guests on July 23.

This summer, NAC Theatre offers three Canadian plays at only \$8 admission each: *Crippled* (July 5-10), *Bliss* (July 19-24) and *Assassinating Thomson* (July 26-31).

More details at nac-cna.ca.

Hamilton: from Broadway to the NAC

After repeated cancellations due to the

pandemic, the hit musical *Hamilton* will finally reach the NAC from July 13-31. The 2h45min-long musical explores the life of American founding father Alexander Hamilton, with songs highlighting many of the conflicts within the new United States and blending varied styles including hip-hop, jazz, and Broadway. Tickets and event information: nac-cna.ca/en/event/21476.

National Gallery of Canada (380 Sussex)

On June 1, the gallery opened a major new exhibition. *General Idea* is an amalgam of work by an eclectic group of artists and is on display until November 20. It includes an audio guide: www.gallery.ca/whats-on/exhibitions-and-galleries/general-idea-audio-tour. Tickets and times: gallery.ca.

Music & Beyond

From July 4-17, the Music & Beyond Festival returns with its first live concerts after two years. The schedule contrasts classical and chamber music with crossover concerts featuring jazz, poetry, tango, a Ukrainian celebration, and more.

See: www.musicandbeyond.ca.

Chamberfest

For classical music fans, there's hardly a break before Chamberfest starts on July 21. Running until August 4, Chamberfest extends from sunrise concerts to its late-night Chamberfringe crossover shows, with lots of core classical repertoire in between. See www.chamberfest.com/series/2022/festival-2022/.

Queen Street Fare (170 Queen)

Queen Street Fare will offer free afternoon jazz shows in the last week of June and on June 25, there's a tribute to the Beatles. See queenstfare.ca/happening.

Live on Elgin (220 Elgin)

Need a laugh? On July 2, Live on Elgin presents *The Eager Beaver Chucklebutts Comedy Showcase*. On July 14-16, Toto Too showcases fun miscast musical theatre solos and group numbers in *I'm Not That... Cabaret*. See www.liveonelgin.com.

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He visited Sydney during the film festival.

Theatre festival relaunched at Arts Court

Matthew Behrens

Following a successful decade in Perth, the Classic Theatre Festival will relaunch this August at the Arts Court Theatre at 2 Daly Avenue. This award-winning professional company decided that a move to Ottawa, where over half its audience is located, made the most sense as the festival emerges from two years of shutdown.

The festival has chosen to stage the Tony Award winner for Best Play: Jan de Hartog's *The Fourposter*. The play is an enduring, comedic chronicle of a marriage during an era of world-shaking social changes.

This beloved Broadway classic, which follows a couple through 35 years of marriage, from a nervous wedding night through childbirth and parenting, mid-life crisis, empty nesting and the realities of aging, is in the

words of Artistic Producer Laurel Smith, "both a tender and at times incredibly funny exploration of an institution that most of us participate in and complain about a lot, but which ultimately represents the foundation for so many adult lives."

The original, smash-hit Broadway production, starring real-life couple Jessica Tandy and husband Canadian Hume Cronyn, was described by a *New York Times* reviewer as "the most civilized comedy we have had on marriage for years."

A musical version of the play, *I Do, I Do*, played on Broadway in the 1960s.

Plays with special feeling

The festival promises a Summer Theatre in the Capital experience that recreates the milieu that made it a popular Perth destination. There will be an entertaining and informative pre-show talk a half hour before the curtain rises to situate audiences in

the play's period. The talk will explore social and cultural references not familiar to everyone.

The lobby will hold a loonie-toonie book sale boasting rare finds. Sale proceeds will fund the festival's Save-a-Seat program, which partners with social services agencies to provide free tickets to low-income community members, allowing them to attend the theatre. Smith says of Save-a-Seat that it distributed 2,500 free tickets in the festival's first decade.

Discounts for BUZZ readers

The Fourposter will run eight times a week from August 5 to 28 from Wednesday to Sunday at 1:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: classictheatre.ca or call 613-695-9330.

Centretown BUZZ readers will receive a 10 percent discount on ticket purchases when ordering by phone and mentioning this article.



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Centretown walking tours explore its history



Shanties for the Rideau Canal workers at Long Island, 1830 by James Pattison Cockburn (Library and Archives Canada)

Jack Hanna

This summer, people can spend some time learning about the history of Centretown, its residents and the worthies for whom streets are named in walking tours. They will originate at the Elgin Street Farmers Market Sunday morning at 11 a.m. There is no charge for the tours, although donations to the Centretown Community Association (CCA) will be gratefully accepted.

An ice sheet and seas

The tours will ask participants to imagine Ottawa's downtown as it was during the last ice age. Twenty thousand years ago, this area was

covered by an ice sheet a kilometre and a half thick. The unimaginable weight of the ice actually pressed the land downward about 170 metres, which is the equivalent of a 50-storey building.

As the giant ice sheet receded, the land remained depressed for a time and was actually below sea level allowing the Atlantic Ocean to flow inland. A huge inlet of the Atlantic, the Champlain Sea, covered Centretown with some 50 metres of brackish water. Fossil remains of beluga whales have been found in this area.

With the weight of the ice sheets gone, the land slowly rebounded upward and the shores of the Champlain Sea receded toward the Atlantic. The inland sea lasted only

a couple of thousand years. Where there had once been ice and then a salt sea, land appeared and humans began to arrive.

Human settlements begin

The Algonquin Anishinaabe lived along the Ottawa River. Although no evidence has been found of lasting indigenous settlements in Centretown, its forests and swamps would have been their hunting grounds.

Then, in the early 1800s, settlers from both America and Britain began to arrive, seeking free or cheap farmland.

Nicholas Sparks, for whom Sparks Street is named, was one of the very first to settle in Centretown. He emigrated from Ireland to work in Philemon Wright's

logging and farming operations located where Gatineau is today. In 1823, he bought land on the south side of the Ottawa River, which takes in all of Centretown north of Lisgar Avenue. The purchase would prove lucky and make him rich.

The British military needed a water route that would bypass the upper St. Lawrence River, with the south shore of the river belonging to the United States. The Americans were making plans once again to invade Canada and the upper St. Lawrence could not be defended. Plans were developed and part of the bypass route would be a canal running 202km from the Ottawa River to Lake Ontario.

Building a canal

Colonel John By arrived in September 1826 to oversee construction. Within days of arriving, he chose to start the canal at the bay located beside today's Chateau Laurier. Thus, the canal crossed Sparks's land and, very shortly, he was selling lots, some at more than 400 times what he had paid to create the village servicing canal construction.

Penniless Irish navvies emigrated to work on the canal and settled in Centretown. They couldn't afford to buy lots and built shanties of turf, or logs, along both sides of the new canal, from today's Lisgar to Waverley Streets. This settlement was named Corktown after County Cork in Ireland.

For these workers, the actual construction of the canal through Centretown was a study in contrasts. The great right-angle turn in the canal at the east end of Waverley Street was dubbed The Elbow. To the north of The Elbow (from Waverley to Confederation Park) canal-building was hard. Men with shovels and wheelbarrows dug through a hill, excavating heavy, slippery clay to



A painting by C.W. Jeffreys showing Col. John By (right) talking to a contractor, as workers build the Rideau Canal locks beside the Chateau Laurier in 1826. (Library and Archives Canada)

make The Deep Cut. Being manmade, this portion of the canal is straight.

However, south of the Elbow (from Waverley to Bank) the landscape was a gift to the canal builders. There was a creek bed, which they called The Gully and builders followed The Gully, which is why the canal's route meanders in this area. In some places, all the canal builders had to do was clear brush from The Gully.

On completion of the canal, businesses and accompanying houses sprang up in some areas along its banks. For example, the hamlet at Neville's Point grew on the west side of the canal at The Elbow, where a water inlet off the canal stretched to the west. The inlet has left its mark. There's an obvious depression that can be seen today at the Canadian Nurses Association building.

Centretown expands

John Neville and his family operated several businesses here, including a steamboat and dock, warehouses, stables and a beer-bottling operation. In the 1880s, Neville's Creek was described by one newspaper as a "cesspool", infamous for its stench.

As the federal government grew, so did the need for housing. Centretown's street pattern was in place by the 1880s and was soon filled with houses. The bulk of its red-brick houses predate the First World War.

This brief history provides some insight into how Centretown developed and there is much more to be discovered during the Sunday walking tours.

Longtime Centretown resident Jack Hanna will lead the weekly history tours. He has much more to tell about Centretown's history.



The birds eye view of Ottawa shows Neville's Point, the hamlet by itself on the west side of The Elbow (the big turn in the canal).

MPP Report: Reflections after the provincial election

Joel Harden

I am deeply humbled to continue as the Ottawa Centre MPP for another four years.

From the convoy to the recent storms, our community has demonstrated deep compassion and solidarity in taking care of each other and organizing for changes our community needs to thrive. Our office will support further organizing in our community.

Knocking on doors this election, our campaign volunteers and I were privileged to have more than 20,000 conversations with our neighbours. These conversations reminded me about how much more work is left to do in Ottawa Centre and in Ontario.

In one conversation with a man named Jean-Marc, he told me about his

struggles in recovering from hip surgery that had been delayed three times. He is permanently disabled and lives on the meagre income offered by the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which provides a maximum of \$1,169/month. For him, health care and raising the ODSP were his top priorities.

For many in our community who are struggling, I am looking forward to getting back to work for them in the Ontario Legislature to reduce hospital wait times and increase ODSP payments. These were key campaign commitments the Ontario NDP made during this election and we will keep pushing for them from the Ford government.

I'd like to hear from you on what you would like our MPP office to focus on for Ottawa Centre over the next four years. You can write to me with your

thoughts at jharden-co@ndp.on.ca.

We are planning a thank-you BBQ tour across Ottawa Centre this summer in different neighborhoods across the riding, where we will enjoy some delicious food. I will bring potato salad, watermelon and plenty of grillables!

I want to hear from you on what our province's future should look like, so sign up for the MPP newsletter at www.joelhardenmpp.ca/sign_up for updates on these BBQs and other events.

It has been the honour of my life to serve our community as your MPP.

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BUZZing around the neighbourhood

Dinah Robinson

Pollinator Protection Week (June 20-26) is underway, and Centretown residents got their hands in the dirt early. There was a lot of planting activity on the May long weekend, as the tradition goes. People have been filling their gardens with flowering plants, shrubs and trees.

On last Saturday, June 18, the Centretown Community Association (CCA)'s Trees, Greenspaces and Sustainability Committee sold pollinator friendly plants at Councillor McKenney's annual Min-to Park No Yard, Yard Sale. Those plants should be in a garden or in a balcony planter by now.

Earlier in June, the CCA hosted a well-attended event in Dundonald Park to celebrate the Year of the Garden with a big pollinator display. The Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library and Ecology Ottawa gave away native plants and trees. And this past week of June 20-26 has been Pollinator Protection Week.

Finding space for a garden

At the Year of the Garden event, a couple of residents asked what they could do if they didn't have a place for a pollinator garden. "Everybody's talking about gardens but I only have a balcony." "I live on the 10th floor. Will bees fly that high?" The answer is, Yes, bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, moths, bats and beetles all fly high.

Pollinators will go where they

are attracted by large patches of flowers with plenty of nectar and pollen, even on rooftop gardens. The key principles of pollinator gardens apply equally to balcony gardens, especially by focusing on native plants. On a balcony, a wind-break can be created using a trellis or a climbing vine to provide shelter from high winds.

How to get rid of your lawn

While many residents have been planting, others have been getting rid of their lawns and converting them to wildflower meadows, vegetable gardens, or flowering ground covers. One property has introduced Dutch white clover. It's a good substitute for grass but it's a non-native species. There are native options available like field pussytoe, boreal yarrow, some types of sedum and even wild strawberries.

Another resident has dug up the grass and is preparing to plant an edibles garden. Many vegetables have only a few flowers that aren't very fragrant and it's difficult to attract pollinators from a distance. However, herbs like chives, thyme and basil have many small blossoms that are loved by native pollinators. Herbs will draw them into the garden where the other flowers are nearby. Many herbs are perennials so they're a one-time investment with years of benefits.

Native pollinators provide the bulk of pollination services in

urban areas. Bumblebees are especially important for vegetable gardens. They provide the buzz pollination required by tomatoes and potatoes. About half of all bees perform buzz pollination, including tiny sweat bees. Large bees such as the bumblebee and the carpenter bee, a type of solitary bee, are the most effective.

Bumblebees live in small colonies of 100 to 200 bees for just one season. Only a newly hatched and mated queen overwinters. She digs a small hole in bare ground five to 15cm deep, which is why it's important to keep bare areas in a garden and Leave the Leaves to provide a blanket to keep her warm for four to six months in the tiny hole. It's also important to have plants that flower in early spring. Bumblebees are emerging from hibernation earlier due to climate change and some years there is very little forage available.

If there isn't a place for a garden, people can still help to protect pollinators in many ways. They can use pots or garden boxes and take advantage of space on their porch or the edge of their steps. Hanging baskets and window boxes can be set up, as well as places to provide fresh water in a bird bath or another container with stones or twigs for pollinators to rest on while they drink. People can find a community garden plot or join a community gardening club like the Dundonald Park Gardening Group. They can educate themselves about the ben-



A bumblebee in flight towards the flowers of Dame's rocket.

DINAH ROBINSON/THE BUZZ

efits of pollinators and the risks to their health and ours, and advocate for better land use, protecting trees and biodiversity, requiring native plant use by landscapers and banning pesticides.

Every type of garden can be pollinator friendly. The primary focus doesn't need to be pollinator

protection in order to benefit them. But it always helps when this is kept in mind. Human health is critically linked to the health of all pollinators.

Correction: In the May issue of The BUZZ, we misspelled an insect's name in a caption because of an editing error. It was a furrow bee.



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