

Neville Park development heading to the OMB

JOANNA LAVOIE
flavoie@insidetoronto.com

A group of Beach residents opposed to a proposed condominium development at the foot of Neville Park Boulevard are asking their neighbours to provide witness statements and attend an upcoming Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing.

The Beach Lakefront Neighbourhood Association (BLNA), a group of residents from the eastern Beach who came together about three years ago to stop a controversial condominium develop-

ment from moving forward in the neighbourhood, is also in need of cash donations to help pay for the legal fees associated with the OMB hearing.

The BLNA has retained the services of Dennis Wood and Cory Estrela of Wood Bull LLP as well as three expert consultants (two planners and an arborist).

Steve Ottaway, the organization's vice-chair, is serving as the group and neighbourhood's representative. His witness statement can be viewed at www.blna.net.

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developers – Dermot Sweeny of Sweeny Sterling Finlayson and Co. Architects and partners George Kaiser and Neheel Suleman – submitted an initial proposal to the city to build a five-storey, 16-unit condominium development and one detached house at 2-4 Neville Park Blvd., and 438-440 Lakefront Lane.

The developer began a process to review and modify its design after some residents and the local councillor expressed that it was simply too big and out of character with the primarily single-family home community.

The revised design was submitted to the city in March of 2008.

Despite the changes, last fall the city officially rejected those modified plans to build a four-storey, 10-unit condominium with one detached house at the foot of Neville Park Boulevard.

At the time they were unveiled, Sweeny explained the modifications took into account community feedback like maintaining more trees on the site as well as reducing the development's height and density.

The initial development application required that the city amend its official plan and rezone 2 and 4 Neville Park Blvd. and 438 and 440 Lakefront Lane. The developers were asking for a variance of 5.4 metres in height and 1.34 times

more than the permitted density of the area.

The modifications to the development plans were done to fit better within the city's 1986 Zoning Bylaw and eliminate the need to amend the City of Toronto's new Official Plan.

Ward 32 (Beaches-East York) Councillor Sandra Bussin's motion to support the planning department's rejection of the application was unanimously accepted at Toronto and East York Community Council's Sept. 9, 2008 meeting. City council further supported that decision a few weeks later at its Sept. 24 session.

Both the city as well as the BLNA continue to maintain the position that a precedent-setting, multi-sto-

rey and high-density condominium development at the foot of Neville Park Boulevard is not good for the community.

In October 2008, the project's developers launched an appeal of that decision with the Ontario Municipal Board.

The OMB hearing is set to get underway on Wednesday, Sept. 16 and is expected to run until Friday, Oct. 2 with the exception of Friday, Sept. 18 and Monday, Sept. 2. It will take place at 655 Bay St., 16th Floor, at 10 a.m. daily.

Anyone wanting to support the BLNA financially can drop off a cheque to the BLNA Inc., c/o Steve Ottaway, 22 Neville Park Blvd., Toronto, ON, M4E 3P6.