



Mount Dennis Community Association



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, Nov 27TH, 6 pm
Alliance Banquet Hall
Alliance Ave & Rockcliffe
... details below



Come out to see the **WESTON SANTA CLAUS PARADE** on Nov. 24th. Everyone is welcome to march with MDCA (kids can ride behind us on the 12 Division float).

A map of Mount Dennis

SHOWCASING THE ARTS IN MOUNT DENNIS on WED. NOV. 27th

MDCA's 2019 Annual General Meeting will be very different from past years. Instead of getting a keynote speaker, we will be showcasing some great examples of our community's artistic talents with galleries, locally-produced videos and live performances that will surprise and, we hope, impress you!

From 6 p.m. onwards early arrivers will be able to tour 501 Alliance and see what makes it Mount Dennis' greenest building. From the awesome atrium mural to the flood gates and roof-top solar farm, 501 Alliance is a testament to local ingenuity and resilience. Learn about its hockey-history, and the sustainability upgrades too!

This evening is all about celebrating our community and appreciating some of the things that make Mount Dennis a great place to live. But of course, because it is also MDCA's Annual General Meeting, it will include a brief year-end financial report and the election of MDCA's Board for the coming year. If you are interested in becoming part of our Board, this is your once-per-year opportunity to do so! E-mail us at board@mountdennis.ca or call 416-614-3371 to learn more.

Where: Alliance Banquet Hall (501 Alliance Ave. at Rockcliffe <http://alliancebanquethall.com/>)

When: Wednesday November 27th. Doors open for tours at 6 pm. Other events start 7 pm. Light refreshments available.

WILL MOUNT DENNIS HAVE A COMMUNITY ICE-RINK IN 2020?

Global warming caused problems for the outdoor ice rink at Pearen Park in 2018 & 2019. Last winter we had only 17 days of usable ice (less than 1/3 of what we used to have) and did only about 100 skate loans. More person-hours were spent building and re-building the ice rink than skating on it! Right now, our plan is to build the rink again, offering skate loans and learn-to-skate guidance. But it depends on both weather and **volunteers**. If you would like to help with rink-building, skate loans or the learn-to-skate program, please email rink@mountdennis.ca or phone 416-614-3371.

HOW TO REACH US

Tel. 416-614-3371

www.mountdennis.ca



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NEW ON THE STREET

We last ran this occasional column in our Fall 2018 issue, and of course Weston Road has changed since then!

CMA Aquatics, at #876 (formerly Bun & Bean, at corner of Cordella) is now our area's first ever tropical fish store, selling coral and aquarium supplies as well as fish (and building custom aquariums) – see advert on page 3.



Across the street at #931, **S.K. Automotive** has returned to our neighbourhood; brothers Kevin & Stephen, who grew up in Mount Dennis and started out beside Royal Motors (until mid 2017), are happy to be back here – see advert on page 3.

The recent opening of **Just Imagine** at #1016 means there is now a cluster of three hair salons at the corner of Weston & Dennis Ave. (The others are **Zicas** at #1030 and **Destiny** at #1023).

Most change seems to be happening just north of Eglinton (though several fully-renovated stores are still vacant). The former Hindu Temple at #1175 is now **Hahozier Stores**, meeting liturgical needs. **Pharmasave** (#1181) – see advert on page 7 - is adding an on-site **True North Clinic**, where a doctor will assist people needing help with addictions. And at #1203 **Quick Fix Toronto Repair Centre** has now opened, repairing cell phones, lap-tops, computers and TVs.

Stores have also shut down in the past year. At #1017 (north of Lambton Ave.), **Bluekat Travel & Financial** has closed. Just south of Bartonville Ave., renovation work on part of the large Medical Centre & Pharmacy building has closed down both **Benya Spa** (#1288) and **Petty's Hair & Beauty** (#1290).

And across the street at Victoria Blvd., # 1331 **Glendale Tire** closed this summer, but has been replaced by **Surge Elektrikal**, commercial electricians who work mainly on stores and restaurants.

MDCA encourages all Mount Dennis residents to get to know and support our local retailers. It is an important way we can all strengthen Mount Dennis and keep our community vibrant.

SCOTTS FUNERAL WINS AWARD

Congratulations to our local funeral home for winning the Arbor Memorial Group's *2019 Platinum Award for Central and South-Western Ontario*, based on its "Outstanding achievements and performance at the highest level".

LOCAL CONTRACTORS EARN PRAISE

Long-term local residents Greg and Jeremy, with their buddy Corey, have done work on more than thirty homes in Mount Dennis. **FourSixteen Construction & Renovation** does a range of projects from minor alterations to additions and new builds. Clients have been impressed by the quality of their work and their collaborative approach. See their advert page 8.



FRANCES NUNZIATA

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URBANARTS ...SERVING UP THE ARTS IN YORK SOUTH-WESTON

The past few months have been a really exciting, activity-filled time at **UrbanArts**. Their SummerArts Program engaged over fifty youth at the Bartonville and Weston Common locations, enjoying arts activities including dance, music, visual arts, food access, field trips and more.

In August the annual week-long CultureShock Festival at Weston Common saw a plethora of artists that included music, dance, spoken word, vendors and community tables, workshops, artist talks and more. The popular Find Your Element Project, a signature part of the City's Cultural Hotspot initiative, culminated with creating a **64ft mural on eight 8-ft panels** that will be installed on the construction hoardings at West Park, and eventually moved inside the new hospital building. Inspiration for the mural came from community members, West Park patients and the Humber River!

UrbanArts' fall programs are now in full swing, with the second phase workshops of **"1000 Words: Seniors' Storytelling through Art"** happening on Bartonville and at the Syme 55+ Seniors Centre in Rockcliffe-Smythe. There will be an exhibit of artworks created by the seniors on **December 5th from 3-5 pm** at Artscape Weston Common.

More Life dance programs are taking place in a number of local schools, along with UrbanArts' **Beat.Mind.Movement** music production and **World of Food** culinary arts programs which are drawing new, excited participants to the Bartonville site. And at Weston Common, the Art Beat program, in partnership with Unison, is among the first of several exciting new programs on the way!

Look out for the UrbanArts float at the Weston Santa Claus Parade on November 24th, and join their annual **Winter Expo** event on December 13th (6-9pm at Artscape Weston Common), celebrating UrbanArts' and local community talent. You won't be disappointed!

UrbanArts thanks the community for being so supportive, and looks forward to seeing more of you!

Learn more at www.urbanartstoronto.org or any of the social media sites @UrbanArtsTO.



Two pieces from the 8-panel mural to be installed at West Park Health Care Centre

ELECTRIC BUSES BASED HERE

The TTC is undergoing a pilot program where 60 fully electric-powered buses, made by three different manufacturers, are being tested in different areas of the City. Maybe you have already seen or used the new TTC electric buses on the 35 Jane and 59 Maple Leaf bus routes. These buses were made by New Flyer and are based out of the Arrow Rd. Garage off Highway 400 and Sheppard Ave W. Here in Mount Dennis, the TTC Bus Garage has completed upgrades to allow for charging and maintenance of its own fleet of Proterra low-floor battery electric buses, now in operation. TTC is aiming for a 100% zero-emissions fleet by 2040.



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CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE NEWS

Climate change has been high profile this fall with September's UN Climate Summit in New York, Youth Climate Activist Greta Thunberg touring North America, and the Canadian electorate giving our new Federal government a solid mandate to take stronger action on global warming.

On October 2nd, City Council declared a Climate Change Emergency and approved accelerating targets for TransformTO, Toronto's Climate Action Plan. These targets call for reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by buildings, transportation, and local energy production, and for increased efficiencies in material usage and water management.

The City's original targets, set in 2017, were to reduce total GHG emissions to the levels they used to be in 1990, called "Net-Zero", and to get there by 2050. But with the Emergency Declaration, the City now aims to reach Net-Zero by 2040, starting with significant decreases in emissions over the next ten years. City Council is expecting an updated 3-year implementation plan this coming spring, and TransformTO staff are busy gathering input for it through city-wide consultations.

But how will all this affect us at the neighbourhood level?



To be a liveable, net-zero energy neighbourhood and inspire others to do the same.

In 2016 Mount Dennis was chosen by the City to be a **pilot Net-Zero neighbourhood**. The City's Public Energy section is preparing the Mount Dennis Community Energy study to plug into the work of City Planning as they design new policies to guide future development in our neighbourhood. As well, improvements are already underway on City properties in Mount Dennis, such as the Urban Arts building and the future Day Care at 1234 Weston Road.

MDCA is actively promoting the vision of an "EcoNeighbourhood" through the City's Economic Development Strategy (*see below*) and its upcoming Community Planning Framework consultations. We expect this to help open up opportunities for greening of local businesses, development of green buildings, and new jobs related to making our area more energy efficient and lowering local GHG emissions.

Early next year, MDCA will sponsor an EcoNeighbourhood Summit, bringing together Mount Dennis residents, businesses, community services and institutions. We will learn about how GHG is produced, consider TransformTO's targets and tools for change, and then design ways to best address those targets locally.

We are asking people to get involved in making climate action happen! Email us at info@mountdennis.ca and briefly let us know where in Mount Dennis you live or work and what aspects of climate action interest or concern you. Look for updates about the EcoNeighbourhood Summit in MDCA e-blasts and on our website at mountdennis.ca.

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR MOUNT DENNIS

Last Spring, the City of Toronto started work on the Mount Dennis Economic Development Strategy. MDCA was among a cross section of stakeholders who met with City Staff, TCI Management consultants, and Councillor Nunziata in three sessions to identify how best to help the economic development of the neighbourhood. Local businesses, government employers and representatives of various community organizations were involved. TCI encouraged participants to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Mount Dennis and what could be built on to provide more economic prosperity in the community. We anticipate the Economic Development Strategy will be completed by the end of this year.

The new transit hub was named as the obvious game changer for the local economy, as it is the backbone for intensifying development in the area. Other area growth was also recognized, such as West Park Hospital expansion, new business along Industry Avenue, and the revitalization of the old Cooper Canada plant on Alliance Avenue. Growing local employment through training and the arts was also seen as an important opportunity. Seven MDCA board members took part in one or more meetings, advocating for growing green business innovation hubs and for the green jobs' targets of TransformTO. The Economic Development Strategy final report, due shortly, will be the focus of an upcoming public meeting.

City Planning will soon start the Mount Dennis Planning Framework Study for guiding area planning and development. Rules for future development of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional property will be reset through the Framework Study process during 2020. New development investments in Mount Dennis can help to strengthen our local economy and generate City resources for making our neighbourhood more socially and environmentally sustainable. In this process, we must ensure growth is balanced and equitable.

NEW GAS STATION COMING

Last year, MDCA and residents opposed a rezoning application that would allow for a gas station in place of an existing restaurant building at the NW corner of Jane & Weston. In a meeting of the Etobicoke York Community Council, residents spoke against the proposal, arguing that a new gas station would run counter to MDCA's Eco-Neighbourhood vision and the City of Toronto's TransformTO policy. Faced with these arguments, the Community Council voted to oppose the rezoning application.

The applicant took the matter to the OMB (a provincial tribunal that makes rulings on disputes involving municipal decisions). In the end the gas station was allowed, and an agreement reached between the applicant and the City, then ratified by City Council on October 2nd. (Ironically, this happened minutes after Council voted to declare a climate emergency!). Under the agreement, the developer will pay for road and sidewalk reconstruction and contribute \$20,000 which the City will spend on business improvement in the area. No left turns will be allowed into the new gas station, and the slip lane at the northwest corner of Jane and Weston will be removed.

This new gas station will be the 5th within a 1km radius (and 26th within a 5km radius). It will have fewer jobs than the restaurants (on land that is designated "Employment Land"!) and City planners admit that a gas station is not the highest and best use of the property. But since a "fuelling station is a permitted use on land designated for employment", we are told there is nothing the City can do (despite its TransformTO policy) to prevent it.

WEST PARK UNDER CONSTRUCTION



West Park Healthcare Centre will stay fully operational during construction of its big new main building, now getting started and expected to be finished and occupied by late 2023. At that point the site's other buildings (except for the Long-Term Care Centre) will be demolished. Construction work will generally happen from 7 am - 7 pm daily, and will include special dust-reduction measures. Trucks delivering to the site will likely come from Weston Rd. via Sidney Belsey and Charlton Settlement, but some may use Dora Spencer. The EllisDon team expects to use off-site parking for some of its work force.

Although most of the 300 trees on the flat (table-land) part of the site will be removed, West Park is committed to planting more than 900 new trees. Since the new building will include underground parking for more than 400 cars, we hope the finished campus will be even greener than before. All the special memorial items throughout the grounds have been documented, and most will be incorporated into the new campus in some way.

As part of the Toronto Community Benefits Network initiative, MDCA has worked hard to get major projects in our area to deliver 10% of the project's trades and craft hours to go to local youth. We were pleased to hear that West Park will be the first Ontario hospital project to provide these, and that the project will include a new fitness trail and gardens for the enjoyment of local residents as well as patients. But we were very disappointed to learn that EllisDon's agreement with respect to providing 10% of the project's trades and craft hours for historically disadvantaged or equity-seeking communities, such as many Mount Dennis residents, is only an "aspirational target" and not a firm commitment.

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THINKING AHEAD ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOLING

If you have a toddler or infant it may seem like school registration is many years away, but it is never too soon to start looking at the options. Like picking a daycare, choosing a school is a really important family decision.

In Ontario, Junior and Senior Kindergarten (JK & SK) are full-day programs; however, your child does not HAVE to go; school registration is optional before Grade 1. Kindergarten class sizes can range from 14 to as many as 28 students, though the teacher will be assisted by an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) if their class size is more than 16. JK and SK classes are often mixed, so while a JK child may be turning 4 in December, an SK child in the same class could be turning 6 in January. Before choosing a school, you may want to find out if it offers morning, afternoon or both recesses for kindergartners, as these breaks are not always part of the Kindergarten program. By visiting schools with an EarlyON Centre for drop-in play, or attendance at a child care centre in a school, you will give yourself an opportunity to review the school's environment and community, and the condition of its facilities and school yard. At many schools, the Parent Council uses social media to promote events and seasonal activities. Further consideration is the availability of before- and after-school care, for flexibility with drop-offs and pick-ups. Student allocation to a school is priority-based, depending mainly on your home address and attendance of a sibling. If a school is not within walking distance, school-bus service may be available so long as your address is within the school's district. Call ahead and find out!

WHERE TO GO TO SCHOOL?

Four publicly-funded school boards serve our community: two for English curriculum, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB); two for French curriculum, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde and Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir. In the English school boards, some schools offer French as a second language with the French Immersion program in the earlier grades, and begin to introduce English alongside the Extended French program in later grades. TDSB opens French Immersion (FI) registration in the Fall before the school year for SK entry, while TCDSB opens FI registration in January before the new school year (as early as JK entry).

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ARE YOU A POP-UP CANDIDATE?

The Mount Dennis Business Improvement Area (BIA) will host its second Holiday Pop-Up in December on three consecutive weekends (including the 21st - 22nd weekend) in the former CIBC building at 1174 Weston Road, north of Eglinton). They are looking for local, west-end artists/artisans to participate. Please contact laura@mountdennisbia.ca to book an appointment and show samples of your work. The BIA will select participants based on merit.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SUN, NOV 24TH, 41ST Weston Santa Claus Parade, 2 p.m.

Starts at Weston & Church, and ends at Sidney Belsey Crescent.

WED, NOV 27TH, MDCA's Annual General Meeting 6-9 p.m.

@ Alliance Banquet Hall (501 Alliance Ave. at Rockcliffe). *See p1 for details.*

SAT, DEC 7TH, Christmas Gift & Crafts Fair, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

@ the Legion (1050 Weston Rd). 40+ vendors with lots of Christmas gifts, & items for your holiday decorating or entertaining needs. A Silent Auction and Snack Bar too!

FRI, DEC 13TH, UrbanArts Winter Expo, 6-9 p.m.

@ Weston Common (34 John St). *See p3 for details.*

SAT, DEC 21ST, BIA's Winter Solstice Celebration

@ Nyctophilia (Weston Rd. at Dennis Ave.); 6-8 pm with Santa, family entertainment, hot chocolate & more.

TUE, DEC 31ST, New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance

@ the Legion (1050 Weston Rd). Enjoy a gourmet buffet dinner prepared by Chef Gerry McElvanna and great music provided by our DJ Tom O'Rourke along with party favours & door prizes. Tickets \$50 for Non-Members (Members \$40) must be purchased by Dec. 24th!

WANT MORE LOCAL NEWS?

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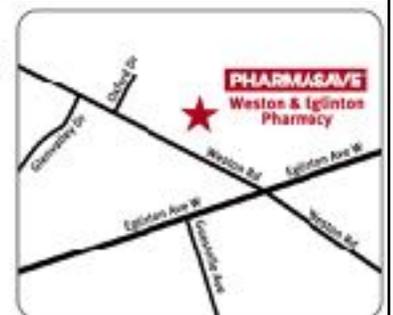
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