



To promote the exchange of information on issues that impact the quality of life in our neighbourhood, broader community and the Town of Oakville, with a particular focus on preserving and protecting our history, streetscapes, natural environment, heritage districts and homes.

OLRA Spring Newsletter

Oakville Lakeside Residents' Association

Spring 2022

OLRA Fiscal 2021 Annual General Meeting

by Amanda Holden

Please mark your calendars for May 11th at 7pm (6:30pm registration.) This year's meeting will include: an OLRA annual update, presentations on the Heritage District Plan, Ontario Housing Affordability and intensification, and an update from the Downtown BIA. Attending and participating will be Ward 3 Council members Dave Gittings and Janet Haslett-Theall, Mayor Burton and BIA leader Adrienne Gordon, as well as other Town staff. The meeting will wrap up with an open Q&A. The meeting is for active members only but you'll be able to renew your membership at the meeting registration. You can check your membership status online at oakvillelra.ca/members.

Please also note - if you are interested in joining our board, reach out to oakvillelakesidera@gmail.com

The Coach House at Erchless

by Geoff Godard

The horse was domesticated around 3500 BC. It soon became the primary mode of overland transport for humankind, other than walking, for over 4,000 years, until the steam powered Newcomen engine was introduced in 1712. It was used primarily to pump water from tin and copper mines in Cornwall (see the streaming series Poldark). James Watt in 1776

introduced an improved version we now know as the steam engine.

Then innovation accelerated at a blistering pace. In 1829 George Stephenson introduced the "Rocket", considered the progenitor of the railroad as we know it today. Only 26 years later, on December 3, 1855, "a great crowd assembled to see the first train pass though Oakville on its way from Toronto to Hamilton."

Transport of heavy goods anywhere else on land not adjacent to the iron horse was still with the help of the flesh and blood horse.

But innovation marched on. The first modern automobile had been built by Karl Benz in 1885. Other entrepreneurs developed the concept, including Henry Ford. By the end of the First World War, the automobile had largely replaced the horse as the primary form



of land transport other than the railroad, which it complemented.

Which brings us to the Coach House at Erchless. It straddles that era of change and transformation. It was completed in 1898 by Allan S. Chisholm to replace what would have been a stable. The new larger structure included accommodation for the stable hands that attended the Chisholm horses. They fed, groomed, cleared manure, and maintained the carriages and buggies used for, as they said in the day, “peregrinations about the Town and countryside, for pleasure or for purpose”.

It was completed while the automobile was still a glint on the horizon. However, within fifteen years the astonishing advance of technology was replacing the horse with the “horseless carriage.” The Chisholms would have repurposed the coach house to accommodate the motor car by 1910 or so.

It is unknown how many horses, then “horseless carriages” were accommodated in the structure by the time the family moved on and the estate became part of the Town of Oakville’s legacy of museums. We do know the coach house lay fallow for many decades, unused except for storage.

In summer 2016 a public consultation was held to explore potential future uses of the otherwise deteriorating structure. A recommended use report followed in early 2017. In 2019 full funding was approved by council and after an archeological analysis the same year, in 2020 design and tenders were complete and construction started in March 2021. The final step, re-roofing, was finished in April this year and the Coach House is planned to open for events in May.

The result is a beautifully restored structure that reflects the building techniques and materials used 125 years ago. Every structural component has been restored. Where damage could not be repaired it was replaced with millwork that matched, using salvaged wood from elsewhere dated to the same period. To the extent possible, new work was undertaken using the same tools and techniques that would have been used in the 1890s.

The original poured glass panes with all their imperfections comprise most of the windows. The original cedar shake wall covering was painstakingly removed and replaced using steam and pressure to replicate original curved arches. The eaves and downspouts are the existing lead-coated copper used in

fine construction in years gone by.

The manure pit is rebuilt, although there is some question on how it may have been emptied, since the restorers found no evidence of a door through which to remove the product of the horses. In any case it would have been quite pungent at times for the adjacent Oakville Club tennis courts and the even closer Lawn Bowling Club!

The following photo essay details some of the painstaking work undertaken by Clifford Masonry Limited, the primary contractor of the project.



Steam-treated curved cedar siding with lead coated copper downspout



OLRA board members and local residents visiting the Coach House opening



Damaged wood is replaced with salvaged wood of similar age, same species



Restored floor in the stable hands quarters with original "wavy" or antique glass windows



The restored box stalls



The new roof with the manure pit in the foreground

The author wishes to thank Karl and Nick, who provided access to and fascinating detail about this very welcome restoration of a long-neglected structure.

Join us for the Fiscal 2021

OLRA Annual General Meeting

May 11th, 7pm at the Oakville Club (Registration 6:30pm)

Board of Directors

A special thank you to the members of the OLRA Board for their contributions and support:

President: Anya Cowan

Past President: George Niblock

Treasurer: Derek Wallace

Secretary: Amanda Holden

Membership: Trish McTavish

Director: Hazel Cole

Director: Dia Frid

Director: Geoff Goddard

Director: Catherine Hurley

Director: Gail Kaufman

Director: Anita Mackey

If you would be interested in joining our board please email us at oakvillelakesidera@gmail.com

Meeting Agenda

This year's meeting will include: an OLRA annual update, presentations on the Heritage District Plan, Ontario Housing Affordability and intensification, and an update from the Downtown BIA. Attending and participating will be Ward 3 Council members Dave Gittings and Janet Haslett-Theall, Mayor Burton and BIA leader Adrienne Gordon as well as other Town staff. The meeting will wrap up with an open Q&A.

Please note that the AGM is for current members only. You can check your membership status at oakvillelra.ca/members

This is an opportunity for you to join the OLRA or renew your membership at \$25 for one year, \$40 for two years. Please see the back of this newsletters for payment options in advance or renew your membership at the AGM (please arrive for 6:30).

Please note, at the time of writing we are planning for an in person meeting and investigating options to also include a zoom link for those not comfortable with an in-person event. Details will follow via email closer to the date.

OLRA Street Captains

by Trish McTavish

In an effort to increase our membership, profile with the Town and to maintain an accurate database of our members, the OLRA is looking for volunteers to be "Street Captains" for their street (or area). The Street Captain's role is quite simple and not time-consuming: just keep the OLRA updated on new families moving onto your street (or into your area) so that we can welcome them and invite them to join and participate in the OLRA.

If you are interested in becoming an OLRA Street Captain for your street, please contact:

Trish McTavish

olramembership@gmail.com



Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan Update

by Anita Mackey and Catherine Hurley

In the fall of 2022, the Town of Oakville announced plans to update the Old Oakville Heritage District Plan. Established in 1981, the Old Oakville Heritage District is one of the first established in Ontario. With changes to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005 and 2021, the Plan requires updating to meet legislation requirements and to reflect heritage best practices.

OLRA is very supportive of this initiative and has



formed a Working Group comprised of members of the Board and member volunteers to review and provide input into the materials being prepared by the Town. The objective is to ensure that appropriate conservation principles and guidelines are being proposed to strengthen the protection, conservation, and management of change to the buildings, and character of the neighbourhood streetscape, including the cultural, landscape and natural heritage elements.

While the Town's process has been delayed, the Working Group has developed a comprehensive work plan that will enable OLRA to contribute to the Town's process in a timely manner.

The key elements of the work plan include the following:

Input to Town's RFP and Heritage Consultant Selection Process (Completed)

We have provided the Town with a proposed set of interview questions for their consideration to use during the Town's selection process of the heritage consultant who will be responsible for the development of an updated Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Input to Heritage Conservation Study & District Plan Elements (Underway)

As part of this process, the Ontario Heritage Act requires the completion of a Heritage Conservation Study as well as a District Plan. The Working Group has identified five main areas where we will provide input and comments to the Town process:

1. Study Structure
2. Building Inventory Analysis
3. Streetscape and Overall District Character Elements
4. Policy and Planning Mechanisms
5. Best Practices – Heritage Guidelines

Participation in Town's Public Engagement Process (To Be Determined)

We recognize the importance of engagement by OLRA and our membership in the Town's outreach and consultation process. While the timing for this process has not been confirmed, the intention is for our Association to actively participate as a key stakeholder. Once timelines have been established, the Working Group will recommend an OLRA engagement and membership outreach process to the Board.

The Working Group is in the process of developing a section on our OLRA website dedicated to this topic. In addition, if you would like to sign up for project updates from the Town, please provide your contact information to heritagedistrict@oakville.ca.

If you are interested in contributing to this effort, please email us at oakvillelakesidera@gmail.com.



Local Business Highlight – Ace Coworking

by Hazel Cole

Following the success of our article about Crack Pot Studio on Robinson Street, I was actively looking for another small business to highlight for our newsletter. It just so happened, that at the same time, Gail Kaufman, a member of the OLRA board, joined ACE Coworking just next to Crack Pot on Robinson. Another business on Robinson! Is this a trend?

I knew that co-working spaces had been popular downtown for a while now, but in the suburbs? In Oakville? My curiosity was aroused, and I felt that others in the neighbourhood might also be interested. Who was the person behind this forward-looking business? When was ACE started up? How was it faring? Yes! I had found a subject for my article. I immediately reached out to Nancy Fornasiero, the owner, who very kindly invited me to visit ACE. The following is her story.

After 20 years of working from home, and with her children long gone, Nancy started to look around for more sociable settings in which to work. She saw many people in her situation working in the library and in coffee shops around town, but to her surprise could not find a single co-working space. Convinced that there was a gap to be filled, she decided to go ahead and create the sort of place she wanted to work in herself. This result is ACE, which opened its doors in 2018. Her decision was quickly validated. By the time the pandemic hit, she had reached 85% of capacity.

Upon my arrival at ACE, I was immediately struck by my surroundings. They were not at all what I had expected; this was no ordinary office space. The vast central area featured wooden desks, surrounded by individual offices, a stylish lounge area, exposed brick walls and a load of colourful pictures painted by local artists. The place had a definite buzz about it. There were people of all ages: some working at their desks, others chatting quietly together in the lounge area and around the



coffee machine. Members, or ACERs, are also offered professional development seminars, a book club, a weekly meditation class and other social events. Happy hour on the roof top patio is a big hit, I was told. “We are much more than just a place to work,” said Nancy, “ACE Coworking is a place to collaborate, network and be inspired by other entrepreneurs and business owners.”

“How,” I asked her, “did ACE fare at the height of the pandemic?” Surely, I thought, an open plan concept was not ideal, given the need for social distancing. Nancy assured me that, in reality, people in co-working spaces are hyper-aware of what it takes to make a shared workspace safe, implementing strict cleaning regimes as well as workplace safety protocols. In fact, ACE was recently the recipient of an Oakville Award for Business Excellence – the Bell Small Business of the Year award. The team was recognized “for their ability to maintain compliance to the province’s safety measures, while keeping their membership for the most part intact, and their business thriving thanks to strategic and creative pivots.”

It seems that the pandemic has permanently shaped how people think about workspaces. Rather than spending hours commuting to an office downtown, many are opting to work online. However, they are hesitant to work full time from home for fear of suffering from a feeling of isolation and loneliness. The co-working concept for many is the ideal solution, at least in our town, judging from the success of ACE. In fact, Nancy just recently opened a second place in the old Nesbitt Burns building on the corner of Church and Trafalgar. Many congratulations, Nancy, we wish you continuing success.

Nancy welcomes all to come and tour.

Nancy has strong ties with Haltech, the Downtown Oakville BIA, Sheridan College, Silicon Halton, Mom-2MomBiz, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Oakville. She has won multiple awards, such as Oakville’s Readers’ Choice Award: new Business 2018 and Best Serviced Office 2020.

Oakville Downtown

Business Improvement Association Update



Mother's Day – May 8

We have partnered with our Downtown floral shops, Fiori Oakville and Moon's Flowers, to brighten mom's day.

Stop by our BOHO Flower Truck beginning at 10AM in Towne Square to receive a free bloom and snap a photo. The first 250 moms to visit will receive a free bloom.

Shop the Street – June 11 & 12

Head Downtown to get ready for summer with savings from Downtown Oakville merchants. Shop the street for deals street-side and in-store.

Summer SWEAT Series – Saturdays in June/July

It's back, Fitness in the Square hosted by our local studios and fitness experts each Saturday morning throughout June and July.

TD Summer Music Series – Saturdays in July/August

Enjoy live music in Town Square and along the street every Saturday afternoon in July and August between 3-7.

From violins, to steel drums, and vocal performances we promise an exceptional line-up of performances guaranteed to be the best part of your summer day.

International Ice-Cream Day – July 17

We're marking the occasion with FREE Ice-cream to the first 250 visitors. Stop by our pop-up in Town Square to cool off with a sweet treat.

Oscillation – August 1-28

Don't miss, Oscillation is an interactive art exhibit that focuses on creating community activity and social interaction through play.

Featuring geometric forms that as you move manipulate the sound and colors, your body becomes an instrument to dance, play, and create with the people around you.



New Docks on the Mighty Sixteen – Update

by Geoff Godard

In the Spring 2021 Newsletter we provided a brief history of the evolution of Oakville Harbour since William Chisholm purchased 986 acres, centred on the mouth of the Sixteen Mile Creek, in August 1827. Our spring 2021 article was in connection with the installation that year of new Town docks to the south of Oakville Yacht Squadron (OYS), on the west side of the creek. The new docks are part of ongoing harbour improvements, envisioned in the master plan that has guided the many improvements in Oakville Harbour. The plan was developed following adoption of recommendations in a study commissioned by the Town in 2011.

The docks are just east of Tannery Park, and completed in 2019. They have a warranted life of 30 to 35 years and are a handsome addition to the harbour. From their sturdy construction and appearance, it seems possible they may be a fixture for many more years than that.

Unlike the ones they replaced, these docks are designed to remain in place throughout the winter. As we know, the Sixteen has many moods. Home to a myriad of waterfowl near its mouth, it can change from a placid frozen winter wonderland for skaters and hikers to a raging torrent carrying ice and debris far out into the lake after a front sweeps through with rain rather than snow.



Skating on the Sixteen 2022

Protection was installed in the late fall of 2021. It comes in two forms: one is a series of bubblers that operate all



One of the bubblers at work

winter. They prevent the ice that forms in the dock area from becoming thick enough to overcome the strength of the docks, the result of the natural expansion of water when it freezes.



The ice boom (fire department rescue training in the background and next picture)



Fire department rescue training in the water - brrr

The second is an ice boom running from OYS to the western pier completely sealing off the new docks from the torrents that carry not only large trees, but in winter and especially during the spring freshet*, huge chunks of ice that have in the past inflicted major damage to anything in the way.

The docks survived their first winter without any sign of damage. The bubblers are now in storage. They worked as planned, as did the ice boom during the several thaws that punctuated our winter. The boom is being repurposed for the summer, further up the creek. Most of the components are large, sturdy steel cylinders,



And the work carries on ...

which will be installed to the north around the power boat docks on the east side of the river, where they will protect those docks (and boats), diverting the debris that arrives, sometimes whole trees, from the upper watershed after a torrential summer storm.

In the meantime, improvements continue. The eastern bank is being reinforced below the Rebecca Street bridge, continuing the work that was completed in the power boat basin last year.

** In days gone by the term "freshet" described the spring thaw when snow and ice melted in rivers in upper North America. The spring freshet sometimes lasts several weeks on large river systems, resulting in significant inundation of flood plains as the snowpack melts in the river's watershed (Wikipedia).*

Intensification, Densification, and the Housing Affordability Crisis

by George Niblock

We have heard a lot recently about the Housing Affordability Crisis from all levels of government. Many in the province and across Canada are concerned that housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable for Canadians. Locally we have seen house prices rise dramatically in the past two years since the pandemic began. Trends to seek more space, indoors for home gyms, home offices, home schooling and outside for recreation, entertaining, continue as people have been less able to travel. Many fled the cities for the suburbs and many more fled the suburbs for the country. At the same time, we have the phenomenon of the Baby Boomers holding onto their homes for longer than previous generations and their children, the next largest age group cohort, the Millennials are moving out and would like homes of their own. An example I heard recently was a family with four children, where all four left home over the past two years. Now this family of six requires five homes instead of just one. Couple this in a country with a pro-immigration policy to support growth and we are clearly short on houses. Hence rising house prices.

The various governments have heard the people and they would like to create the impression that they are acting on this issue. The federal government is planning to make the bidding process more transparent for properties and says, with no evidence, that this will help cool bidding wars. More transparency is usually a good thing, but this will not reduce house prices. The province threatened to eliminate 'exclusionary zoning' (single family residential neighbourhoods) to allow multi-storey apartment buildings to be built in our established neighbourhoods - also known as "densification". They said that municipalities and NIMBYs (not in my back yard) are the problem. They've corrected course for now on this issue after hearing feedback from groups like our WeLoveOakville. They know of course that making those changes also do nothing to make housing cheaper.

So, what can be done? Certainly, we know that governments do need to create policies that allow for more housing to be built. Oakville's approach has been to accept that there will be a significant provincially mandated population growth over the next 10-15 years, and we would like to see this intensification concentrated in our identified growth nodes as

outlined in the Livable Oakville Plan. These growth nodes in Oakville are essentially around the transit hubs/Go Stations, in particular Mid-town Oakville (north of Cornwall Road and south of the QEW). Most in our town are against the idea of more urban sprawl. Intensification (mid and high-rise condominium and apartment buildings) seems to be the way to go. I believe we must accept and support this type of change because otherwise our established neighbourhoods and heritage districts will surely be the next targets. As residents' associations we must keep tabs on these developments to ensure that they are meeting the standards of good planning and living up to the promises of our Official Plan, 'Livable Oakville'. The OLRA will continue to provide information and communications to keep you informed.

Art in My Garden

by Rachel Williams

Art in my Garden is coming back to Old Oakville. It's not surprising after the success of latest year's event. Mark the date: Saturday, September 10th, rain date September 11th.

We are seeking friendly residents who would like to offer

their front lawns/front property to local artists. Please contact Rachel Williams, 647 629 8949 or rachelwilliamsuk@gmail.com.



St Jude's Plant Sale

by Cath Sparling

Finally, after a two-year hiatus the Garden Guild of St. Jude's Church will again be able to hold its annual plant sale, May 14, 2022 at 8:30am to 11:30am. The proceeds from this fundraiser go back into the gardens surrounding the church for maintenance and upkeep of the trees, shrubs, and plants on a year-round basis. For example, the eleven magnolias needed treatments throughout the summer last year to control scale and the memorial oak tree required care to control a gypsy moth infestation. The monies also purchase replacement plants that are lost through winter kill and



disease.

As in past years this sale will have upwards of 1500 plants from which to choose: a wide variety of herbs and specialty vegetables, a large assortment of perennials for all seasons, and this year there will be a surprise product for sale to enhance your gardens. So come and check it out.

The preservation of these gardens is under the dedicated care of 20 volunteers. We always welcome gardeners or want-to-be gardeners to join us on Thursday mornings for friendship and collegiality as well as digging in the dirt. Our goal is to ensure these gardens continue as a haven that welcomes all who pass through to enjoy Nature's beauty.

We Love Oakville Housing Affordability Campaign Update

by George Niblock and WeLoveOakville

In early March we sent out an email update alerting of concerns regarding the Ontario government Housing Affordability Task Force Report and recommendations released to the public in February. The OLRA offered our support to the WeLoveOakville (WLO) campaign to share concerns that these possible changes may put our heritage community at risk and that they do not consider the growth plan that Oakville has developed. We are pleased to report that the March 30, provincial government has heard and responded to our concerns.

The WLO campaign provides this further update:

On March 30, provincial government announced new legislation to accelerate approval of proposed residential developments. The province says that it will not impose a one-size-fits-all approach to the housing issue. Among the highlights, the legislation being brought forward doesn't change heritage protections and it maintains the character of established neighborhoods. Our local voice and our official plan, Livable Oakville, remain intact and we can continue on the path of intensification around our transportation hubs. We note that the door has been left open to revisit more radical measures post-election.

While we doubt the legislation will do much to address housing costs, we thank the government for considering our (and other citizen) input, and for not pursuing several radical recommendations that would be damaging for our neighbourhoods. As a result, WeLoveOakville has decided to suspend its email campaign to officials for now. We sincerely appreciate your early support and encouragement for our campaign. We depend on your involvement in taking on important issues together.

Changes are still evolving and WLO will continue to monitor the situation. There are several ongoing concerns, so we will be watching developments closely. We will be ready to re-engage when it's needed.

Join the OLRA or Renew

Membership Information

The Oakville Lakeside Residents' Association is a volunteer non-profit organization. Since 1966, we have been a strong voice for our neighbourhood on issues that impact our community. We are committed to keeping our members informed on what is happening in our neighbourhood and our Town.

We engage our members via: oakvilleira.ca, email, Facebook, newsletters, blogs, meetings, and neighbourhood events.

JOIN or RENEW TODAY!

The membership fee is \$25 a year (May 01 - April 30) per household or \$40 for two years.

We offer two ways to pay:

1 Cheque: Please mail your name, street address, phone number and email along with a cheque payable to "Oakville Lakeside Residents' Association" to:

109 Thomas Street,
P.O. Box 69585
Oakville, ON, L6J 7R4

2 INTERAC e-Transfer: Please send an e-Transfer through your online banking to: olramembership@gmail.com - ALSO email us your name, street address and phone number.

Check your current membership status at oakvilleira.ca/members

Our success depends on a broad base of support in a well-informed community!

Gratitude and appreciation to the following people who contributed to this edition of the OLRA newsletter:

Authors: George Niblock, Geoff Godard, Oakville BIA, Hazel Cole, Amanda Holden, Anita Mackey, Catherine Hurley, Cath Sparling, Rachel Williams

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