

# Vale of Avoca/Yellow Creek ravine coalition

## REPORT ON MEETING WITH COUNCILLORS

May 16, 2017, at 12:30

Attendees: Councillors Wong-Tam and Matlow

### Residents associations:

Deer Park: Joan York, John Taranu  
South Rosedale: Don Hogarth,  
North Rosedale: Lewis Reford, Rob Spindler, Gary Bryck  
Summerhill: Debbie Briggs, John Bossons  
Moore Park: Chris Lowry, Rob Spindler

### City staff:

City Planning: Mario Giambattista  
Parks: Richard Ubbens, Dave Nosella, Alex Shevchuk  
Toronto Water: Bill Snodgrass  
Urban Forestry: Ray Vendrig

## 1. Stair reconstruction (Mathersfield stairs, Heath Crescent stairs)

David Nosella provided an update on problems related to the Heath Crescent stairs. The TRCA is about to report on slope stabilization issues at Heath Crescent, which may delay or even preclude repair of the Heath Crescent stairs in the near future. More details to come on this when the TRCA report becomes available.

The Mathersfield Stairs were not discussed at the meeting. Alex Shevchuk had provided an update to John Bossons on the Mathersfield stairs by e-mail before the meeting (i.e. Peter Kozovski of Parks Technical Services advised that work should begin soon pending TRCA approval).

## 2. Near-term work plan issues

- a) Erosion-prevention issue (trees fallen into stream)
- b) Safety issue (path erosion on east side of stream)
- c) Reforestation issues

Ray Vendrig will undertake to coordinate a field walk visit (parks staff, community reps, and Councillors if they can) of the ravine system, later in the summer (June ?). The field walk will (i) allow Parks staff to evaluate tree trunks which have fallen into (and are blocking) the stream, and (ii) on the safety and reforestation issues, look at places where near-term work is feasible and desirable. Bill Snodgrass indicated that TW crews remove woody debris from the entrance grate to the downstream piped section of Yellow Creek, frequently, and that a design study will be initiated to rehabilitate the storm sewer outfall from the east bank / south side of St Clair. John Taranu raised the issue of signage to warn cyclists of paths where only foot traffic is safe.

3. Ravine strategy and funding

Councillors Wong-Tam and Matlow emphasized the importance of residents pressing for funding to implement the City's Ravine Strategy when it is brought to the City Executive Committee, hopefully at that committee's meeting June 19. The timing of this meeting is dependent on the pressures on the Executive Committee's agenda.

Given the constraints on the City's budget, it will be essential for as many of us as possible to appear before the Executive Committee as deputants and/or write letters to the committee, urging it to ensure that this is treated as a priority in the City's 2018 capital budget. Without substantial citizen pressure, it will be all too easy for the City's Budget Committee to relegate the Ravine Strategy to an unfunded or inadequately funded statement of principles.

4. Report on ravine master plan and staff/community working group

Because of the delay in Executive Committee consideration of the Ravine Strategy, the report responding to the motion moved at the Parks & Environment committee last year by Councillors Wong-Tam and Matlow will not be brought to the committee before next September.

Richard Ubbens spoke to the importance of the Vale of Avoca plan as an example of how the Ravine Strategy will be implemented across the City. It makes sense to have the Vale of Avoca report before Committee and Council either after or with the Ravine Strategy. The Vale of Avoca plan will be highly informed by the geomorphic study results and will be in keeping with Ravine Strategy principles.

5. Longer-term work plan timetable

- a) Timetable for hydro geomorphic study (Toronto Water)
- b) Related environmental assessment (Parks)
- c) Timetable for subsequent construction and dependence on funding

Bill Snodgrass reviewed the timetable for the hydro-geomorphic environmental assessment study, which will commence early in 2018, based on an RFP release later this year, and which is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. Bill reiterated Toronto's commitment to two community meetings to review initial findings and projected design solutions, as a part of the Environmental Assessment study process.

The environmental assessment process and subsequent potential parks improvements (Parks and Toronto Water) will occur in parallel, with more opportunities for community input.

Richard Ubbens emphasized that the Creek Restoration works would be the first stage of longer – term ravine works, providing the foundation for the assessment of other restoration works (trails, riparian vegetation). Councillor Wong-Tam noted that the EA Study will provide a rigorous basis for public consultation and a comprehensive repair plan for the creek. After completion of the EA study, a design study will be the next stage of work to implement proposed design solutions for rebuilding the Yellow Creek watercourse. Logically, the design study would start in 2020, hopefully to include rebuilding of the washed-out bridge. The respective responsibilities of the different Departments will be determined by staff, at that time.

Work to be undertaken to restore paths and other features near the stream will necessarily follow each stage of the stream rebuilding.

The entire Yellow Creek work program will likely take several years; several City Staff noted Mud Creek as a relevant example which will have involved around 15 years, from time of initiation to finish.

6. Potential uses of Section 37 funds [?]

- a) Heritage stream bank reconstruction and bridge reconstruction
- b) Connections to reservoir
- c) Upper-level paths improvements
- d) Acceleration of reconstruction

Mario Giambattista reviewed how this works. Councillors Matlow and Wong-Tam both emphasized that (1) they are keen to see Section 37 funds used in ways such as park enhancements that benefit the local community but (2) Section 37 funds are not a replacement for City base funding from its budget for maintenance, repair, and other necessary capital work. They also emphasized that there could be several years before the Section 37 funds from current development projects are received and become available for use.

This issue will need to be revisited.