

Thursday, February 21, 2008

## **Don Mills Residents Have Given Enough!**

An article in today's Toronto Star titled Big Changes Urged at City Hall, discusses expert recommendations to ease the city's financial burden. These recommendations include that the city "...consider allowing height and density swaps on new buildings to be used across the city, not just in wards where development takes place." In other words, Toronto residents are in for increased building heights everywhere.

In Don Mills, it's pretty obvious we're being asked to allow a huge increase in building heights for phase two of Cadillac Fairview's Don Mills Centre development. The Central Don Mills Secondary Plan states, "...no building or structure will exceed 8 storeys." (Point 4.3.2). This regulation was put in place to protect the community and its character. However, it seems as though some in Don Mills are resigned to the idea of accepting considerably taller buildings and higher density in return for the vague promise of a community centre.

This begs the question: If we do agree to extra floors on the condominiums, why does it need to be more than three times the permitted height? Allowing between two and six extra floors would already be a significant concession. Why do we need to make it twenty? The resulting increase in traffic and environmental impact will be enormous. It is obvious that more than a thousand new residences, along with the new retail development, will cause a significant increase in traffic and therefore in noise and pollution.

And extra floors are not all the community has been asked to "give." Already in Phase One, we were told that while we were losing our indoor mall, we would "get" a community centre instead. Now, in Phase Two, we are again told that we need to give something up in order to get the same indistinct community centre. This time around, we have already conceded to a multi-level parking garage, which was supposed to be discouraged according to the Secondary Plan. We are already allowing through roads on the Don Mills centre, which is also against the Secondary Plan. We are threatened with the loss of our medical building at 75 The Donway West. And as Jeanetta Vickers, the Don Mills resident who has led the fight for the preservation of the medical building, has so well stated, the community is being robbed of its identity. The character of our neighbourhood is being drastically and irreversibly altered. Yet, again, we are expected to give. This time, we are being asked to give our blessing to monstrous heights, on multiple buildings, again for an uncertain community centre. We have already given more than enough! And all for an elusive, nebulous, and non-specific community centre.

If you have had enough and don't want to give any more, let your city representative know. As another article in today's Star (unfortunately an obituary), written by Christopher Hume, states: "Final decisions regarding development rest with councillors..."

There will be a public meeting, likely in May or June, but in the meantime, you can phone or write your councillor. The contact information for the three Don Mills councillors is as follows:

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