

RE : DON MILLS ARENA FACES ENVIRONMENTAL WORRIES

Don Mills residents' concerns are not where the Civitan Club will build its new facility, but rather **when will the long-promised Community Centre be built in the heart of the community and alongside the existing arena, where there are no environmental worries.** A recreation facility dedicated entirely for hockey 7 km **outside** the community should be called a name that is appropriate for that area. It is no longer the Don Mills Arena.

It is correctly stated by Mark Rapus of the Conservation Authority, that the purpose of the lands near the 401 are for the **regeneration of a forest**. The lands must remain for that purpose **such that we will eventually have a continuous natural filter for the reduction of automobile noise and pollution assisting in the re-creation of a lost healthy environment.** The lands should not be punctured by parking lots and structures.

It appears, however, that “our” Councillor, staff, and even Mayor Miller sit idly by and watch major decisions being botched up by a small group representing less than 5% of the residents. **The whole community of 25,000 people should be extensively consulted and decisions made prior** to any negotiations with the developer. It is a disgusting scene that the community's heart and soul is being negotiated behind the scene and without any information to the greater number of residents from “our” local Councillor and/or his staff.

It appears that “our” Councillor, staff, and Mayor Miller do not have the guts to tell Cadillac Fairview and their builder that **the most priced real estate in Don Mills is not for sale** and that, in addition, **Cadillac Fairview will have to provide the necessary lands for park purposes and build a community Centre prior to any further development.** The location for the Community Centre must be in front of the current arena such that it is accessible by residents walking, bicycling or using public transit, while being visible to the whole community. A neighbourhood park is also required even if only 1000 new residents are permitted. They will not be without kids for long judging by the current trends in the community. This park must be attached to the existing arena lands to maximize maintenance efficiency and ease of access for residents to the west of the centre. (A 1.5m sidewalk will not do.) The existing arena must form part of the community centre complex, as is the case anywhere else. **By now, it should be evident that Don Mills is highly deficient in neighbourhood and community parks. By now it should also be known that inner cities without civic and recreational facilities turn violent.**

It appears that the Civitan Club has been the pawn in the middle of all this, simply because of the inability of the city to properly plan and stipulate what is necessary to be done. It is hoped that the Civitan Club will find a place along Don Mills Road in the nearby industrial area, perhaps replacing the football field in the valley just north of the OAA headquarters, accessible by car and transit.

People in the community have been without a community centre for over 2 years and without other recreation for a much longer time. It is high time that Mayor Miller or a representative appointed by him take the initiative inform and consult the larger community prior to any further negotiations with the Teachers' Pension Fund. It is high time that the tail stops wagging the dog.

Karl Frank, BLA

Resident, retired from 30 years practice in city planning, urban design and landscape architecture.