



Sarah Doucette

City Councillor
Ward 13

Dear residents,

I hope you are all enjoying the beginning of spring (although it feels like we went directly from the leaves falling to the trees budding) and the early blooming of everything!

This year started with an animated budget debate, capping off many months' worth of consultation with residents across the city. At the crucial moment, Councillors of varying political stripes came together to help keep pools, arenas, and community centres open. It was the catalyst for a more collaborative Council and I am really happy to see that spirit has continued on matters significant to residents across the City such as transit, housing, and sports field fees for children and youth.

Recently, residents of Ward 13 have been tested by the threatened closure of the High Park Zoo and the partial destruction by arson of our beloved Jamie Bell Playground. Well, let me take another opportunity to say to all of you, *thank you!*

You have rallied together to save the High Park Zoo. As a result of your action, we've made it very clear to everyone at City Hall and our fellow residents across the city that the High Park Zoo is treasured, and worth keeping.

You also came together to support the rebuilding of the Jamie Bell Playground. This was a labour of love for all who took part in the original build. As a parent organizing playground builds on Toronto District School Board property at the time, I knew who to go to for advice and encouragement. I went to Jamie. He was always passionate about engaging children in imaginative and constructive ways. I was honoured to know him and today I'm proud to help you in your efforts to honour his vision.

This year you continue to make your priorities clear and I have done my best to represent them at all times. My efforts are still focussed on listening, responding, and taking action. Since our last newsletter in December 2011, we've hosted Town Halls in Warren Park and the Junction, and are planning at least one more before July. In addition, I've worked with many of you at numerous community consultations and working group meetings about local developments and I have seen you at BIA and Residents' Association meetings. We also have a Ward Council meeting planned for May which will be attended by representatives from the BIAs, Residents', Tenants', and Ratepayers' groups. (If you would like information about upcoming meetings, please ask us to add your name to our e-newsletter list.)

As always, if you ever need any help with City matters, please contact my staff and me by calling 416-392-4072 or sending an email to councillor_doucette@toronto.ca. I hope you will take a minute to read this newsletter and find out what's been happening in the Ward. I look forward to seeing many of you out and about this season.

Sincerely,

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With Jamie Bell's family receiving a cheque from TD Canada Trust to rebuild the playground.



Meeting with Theo, who gave me his petition to save The High Park Zoo.

1. High Park Children's Teaching Kitchen

The High Park Teaching Kitchen is being built in place of the picnic shelter adjacent to the Children's Garden in High Park and is nearing completion as you read this. It will be a special place for children, youth, and community members to gather together and learn about healthy food, nutrition, organic gardening, and nature. The kitchen will stand as a unique, energy efficient building, serving as an educational venue around healthy eating and healthy environments.

2. Earth Hour Walk

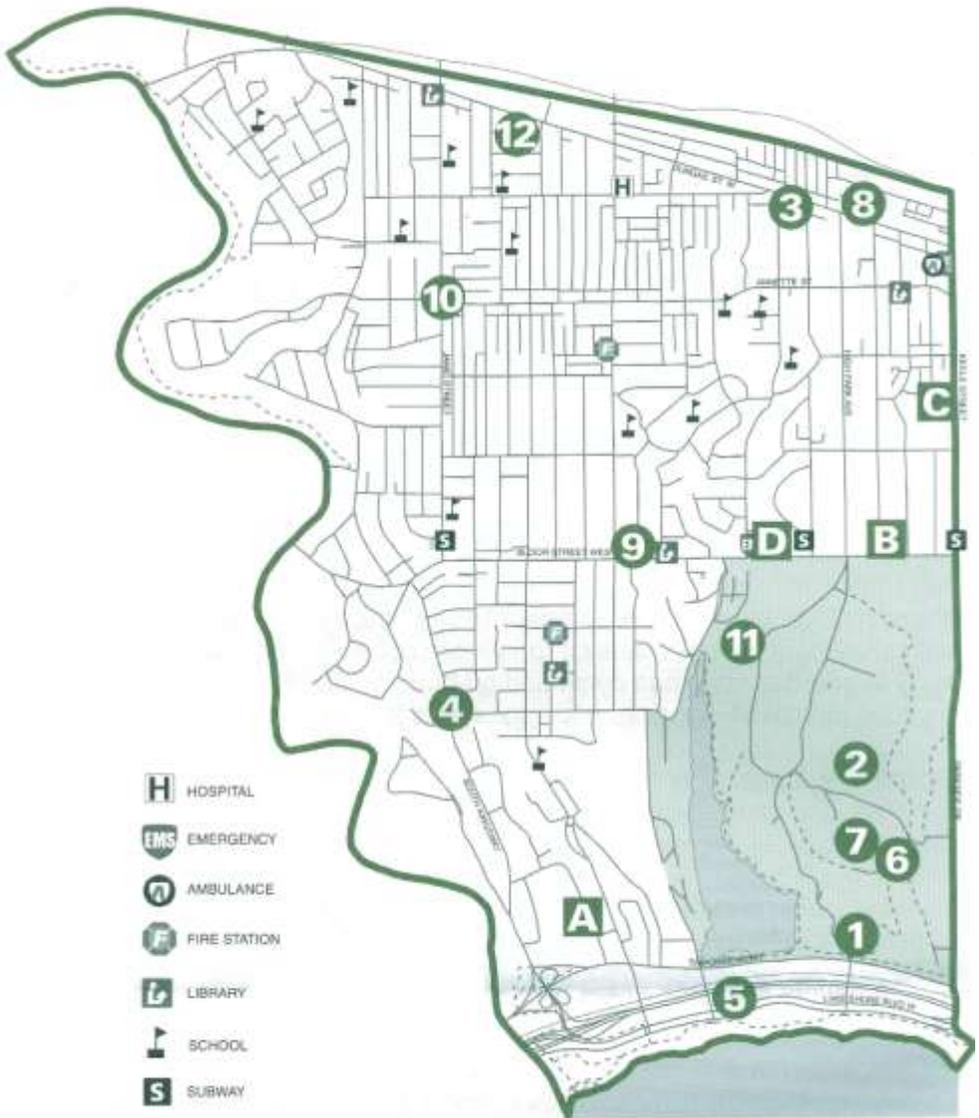
On March 31, Green 13 held its annual Earth Hour Walk. This year, the walk took place in High Park going through the zoo and down to the Jamie Bell Playground. Over four hundred people showed up to increase awareness about climate change by powering down and joining the candlelight walk. After the walk we gathered at the Grenadier Cafe for speeches, musical performances, and hot chocolate.

3. Safety in the Junction Meeting

I held a public meeting on March 21 in the Junction to discuss a string of cases that have been in the news. Officers from our 11 Division Police Station joined me in going over recent events and sharing tips on what can be done to prevent crime. The Crime Prevention Association of Toronto also stopped by to talk about the Neighbourhood Watch program, and what residents should watch for on their own streets.

4. New Traffic Lights at South Kingsway and Morningside Ave

In September, 2011, City staff conducted a safety audit of the existing pedestrian crossover on South Kingsway just south of the intersection with Morningside Ave. The safety audit revealed that vehicles travelling southbound on South Kingsway were moving at speeds exceeding 60 km/hr, in this 50 km/hr zone. This speed exceeds that which the city believes safe for the operation of a pedestrian crossing. As a result, at the March Etobicoke York Community Council meeting Councillors voted to remove the existing pedestrian crossing and install traffic control signals instead. The traffic lights will be "semi-actuated" which means that they will only change if there is a pedestrian waiting to cross or a vehicle waiting to exit from Morningside. This operation will limit the delay to traffic on South Kingsway.



5. 145 Downtown / Humber Bay Express Bus

This bus route operates between Kipling Avenue and the Downtown Toronto area during rush hour, Monday-Friday. It also passes within one block of the Queen, Osgoode, St Andrew and King Stations on the Yonge-University-Spadina Subway line. Accessible service is provided on the route and both Queen Station and Osgoode Station are accessible subway stations. It serves local bus stops in Ward 6 and stops at Windermere Road, Ellis Avenue, Colborne Lodge Drive in Ward 13, on the way to the downtown core.

The route is at risk due to low ridership and it would be a shame if this service were cancelled because, in both Wards 6 and 13, a growing number of people are expected to move into the Lake Shore and Humber Bay areas during the next few years. We need to find a way to increase ridership now. To find out more about the Bus 145 Working Group and upcoming TTC Meeting where 145's fate will be decided, visit Facebook and type in "145", you'll get the "Ride the TTC 145 Downtown/Humber Bay Express Bus" page.

6. Jamie Bell Playground

As many of you know, on Saturday, March 17, a portion of the castle in the Jamie Bell Playground was destroyed by arson. As soon as the fire was out, the community sprung into action with offers of help and ideas on how to stay true to Jamie's original vision and make it even better for children and parents who come from across the city to enjoy it for the unique design and experience.

Hundreds of residents have contacted my office to offer their time and support. Many of them have asked where to make a donation (www.torontoparksandtrees.org) and many corporate donors have been in touch with the City and my office. As you know, Canadian Tire immediately contacted us with a donation of \$50,000 and support on the actual build date. You may have also heard that the TD Canada Trust branch at Runnymede and Bloor presented a cheque for \$10,000 to the Jamie Bell family and myself for the rebuild.

Donations have taken many forms, including time, ideas, building materials, and designs. For example, Natural Playgrounds and Landscape Ontario made a very generous offer to add new elements to the Jamie Bell Playground area (separate from the original structure). Unfortunately, we could not responsibly accept their offer within their time line, as public property and natural areas are subject to careful analysis before anything can be done to alter them. Luckily, there may be elements of the Natural Playgrounds design that we could work with and Landscape Ontario members are interested in donations of material and labour to the park at the end of their busy season.

I will be hosting a community meeting to ask for input on the design of the destroyed portions of the playground. Please don't hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions about the build or the upcoming community meeting.

7. High Park Zoo

What an outpouring of support there has been for the zoo! The newly formed Friends of High Park Zoo have taken on the job of raising awareness and fundraising with amazing energy and commitment. At their first public meeting, I was able to announce that the Honey Family Foundation have kindly offered to match donations, up to a total of \$50,000, donated through the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (www.torontoparksandtrees.org). Donations made from April 10 to June 15, 2012 will be matched; amounts of \$10 or more will receive a tax receipt. For more information on the efforts to save the zoo please contact FriendsofHighParkZoo@gmail.com or visit www.highparkzoo.ca

The Friends of High Park Zoo are using the suggestions gathered at the meeting to put together a business plan to find sustainable funding of \$227,000 per year to keep the High Park Zoo open. I would like to thank everyone who has donated their time and money to help us continue to keep this free, year-round, family destination open. (Cheques can also be used and mailed to Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation, 157 Adelaide Street West, Suite 123, Toronto ON M5H 4E7. Please clearly write "High Park Zoo" in the subject line.)



Visiting with the llamas at the High Park Zoo

Our Ward's Business Improvement Areas:

8. The Junction BIA

Throughout the entire month of May, visit the Junction to experience the Annual CONTACT Photography Festival, featuring photography at 18 locations featuring 21 different artists. Please visit www.thejunctionbia.com for more information.

9. The Bloor West Village BIA

Bloor West Village will be hosting the Ukrainian Festival again from September 14 to 16, between Jane St and Runnymede Road along Bloor St West. For more information on the festival, visit their website at <http://www.ukrainianfestival.com>.

10. The Baby Point Gates BIA

In the past year, the Baby Point Gates BIA has worked to create a vibrant streetscape for the area. Starting with their historic murals and followed by the banners, the BIA has created a recognizable shopping district. This summer they will be adding flowers to the mix, as the planters along Jane and Annette will be brought to life. Make sure you stop by the ward's fastest growing shopping destination.

DEVELOPMENTS

For updates for developments including:

- A. 34-50 Southport Road
- B. 1844 Bloor Street West
- C. 200 Keele Street
- D. 1990 and 2114 Bloor Street West

Please visit my website at www.ward13.ca or send me an email at councillor_doucette@toronto.ca.

11. Prescribed Burn in High Park

On Wednesday, March 21, the Parks department undertook a prescribed or "controlled" burn in High Park, which is a deliberately set and carefully controlled fire that burns low to the ground and consumes dried leaves, small twigs, and grass stems, but does not harm larger trees.

Prescribed burns have been safely executed in the past by the City's Urban Forestry unit, and are part of the long-term management plan to protect and sustain Toronto's rare black oak woodlands and savannahs. In order to survive, they depend on periodic fires which get rid of competing vegetation, enrich the soil and promote growth and germination of rare savannah species.

12. Jillson Ave Speed Limit Change

In 2010, residents presented a petition to the City requesting a speed limit change to curb the excessive speed of the vehicles using Jillson Ave as a through street. Though Transportation Services' study indicated a speed limit change was not warranted, the residents persisted and I asked staff to take another look. Eventually, after a second refusal report from Transportation, I requested that my colleagues on Etobicoke York Community Council (EYCC) support the residents and vote in favour of lowering the speed limit. I'm pleased to say that EYCC did vote for the speed limit change and Jillson Ave will become a 40 km/hr zone.

Environment Day

Our ward's Environment Day is taking place on May 12. Attached is a flyer with more information. If you would like to see what other Environment Days are taking place around the city, please visit www.toronto.ca/environment_days.

Sports Fields

In the 2012 City Budget fees were placed on children and youth sports fields, some for the first time. Unfortunately, as most sports organizations had completed their budget and registration process for 2012, they were unable to raise the additional funds required to meet these fee increases. At the March City Council meeting I put forward a successful motion asking city staff to look at providing relief to organizations unable to comply with this new fee structure. The motion also asked that a system be put in place so that in future sports organizations are notified in advance of any fee increase. Following this, a number of Councillor and I held a public consultation at City Hall to discuss these changes. This motion and the public consultation brought to light the importance of this issue to residents across the City.

I am thrilled to say that at its April meeting Council voted unanimously on a motion brought forward by Councillor Davis and myself to not implement these fees for 2012. The \$1.5 million of anticipated revenue will come from the surplus in another area of the City budget, not the Parks budget. A motion was also passed to ensure proper consultation will occur before any changes are made for the 2013 season. A funding strategy for sports field renewal will be created and public information sessions on the User Fee Policy will be a part of the 2013 budget process.

Did you know?

- If you want to engage the visually-impaired auditory cues at intersections with traffic lights, you must hold down the Walk button for 3 seconds.
- You should be placing your garden waste out at the same time as your other waste to be collected that week. Please do not leave garden waste out at the curb before your collection day.
- To get information about local road closures and restrictions, visit this Web site at any time: http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/road_info/.
- Remember to lock your front doors while you're gardening in your backyard this season!
- Vehicle operators are only allowed to idle their engines for one minute during any 60 minute period.
- On streets which have alternate side parking that changes monthly from one side of the street to another, parking enforcement provides a nine hour grace period before issuing tickets. For example, if the parking hours are 12:01 am to 7 am and the switchover date is the 15th, a person can park on the "new" side by 10 pm of the 15th. Alternatively, they must move their car by 9 am on the 16th.
- Our office receives an average of 50 phone calls and 200 emails a day. Unless we receive an electronic petition which means we could get between 500-1000 emails a day. Most of our interaction consists of helping you with municipal issues, but we also receive many calls and emails from you sharing views and concerns about the City and Council.
- In the summer, our garbage collection will be taken over by Green for Life Environmental East Corporation. We will provide more information nearer that time. (Please sign up for our newsletter at www.ward13.ca or at councillor_doucette@toronto.ca for timely updates.)



With local artist David Allen, who has displayed his photography in my office for the past few months.