

Amid growing opposition from activist groups, an urgent appeal is being made to the North York City Council to block a 17-storey development only a block away from one of Toronto's busiest intersections at Yonge and Eglinton.

Two community groups are ready to besiege the planning application meeting of the North York Community Council on August 17 at 3:30 and plan to organise a number of deputations by people in the area who have expressed their outrage about how the issue has been handled by the City.

The proposed new block development has caused fury among community members, who say that it is excessive and inappropriate. It represents a quantum leap over the already supersized buildings in the development frenzied Yonge Eglinton area, and will

- thrust into the surroundings of adjoining single family residences and a stable residential neighbourhood
- steal most of the skyview and sunlight from Stanley Knowles Cooperative (SKC) apartments that were specifically designed to accommodate people with disabilities or seniors who have limited ability to go out
- cause traffic congestion and hazards to pedestrians (on the short strip of the street, there is already a loading dock for the shopping mall, garbage pick up for two large apartment buildings and two garage entrances for the shopping and business centre and the apartment buildings)
- increase the air and noise pollution with the additional garbage pick-up and traffic
- create a wind-tunnel with quality of life consequences

The SKC has joined the Avenue Road – Eglinton Community Association (ARECA) in protest to the change of current zoning in the Yonge / Eglinton area and the city approval process. Within only 5 days of meeting with the community, the planner, who demonstrated that he was unfamiliar with the development context, produced a final report that ignored the main concerns and recommended it to the Council for approval.

The community groups took their complaints against the City process to the Ombudsman last week.

"The proposal and the way the public has been excluded from the process is an absolute disgrace", said Katerina Fisher, a member of the SKC action group. "We will not allow the abuse of process by the City to pass unnoticed, and there will be consequences."

SKC and ARECA reject the City Planning Department processes. Their concerns include

- insufficient access to vital planning information held by City staff
- access to complete, accurate and current information from all parties - especially in the light of recent Rio Can redevelopment plans for the Yonge/Eglinton Centre
- the fact that the area has already met and exceeds intensification targets required under Toronto's Official Plan
- insufficient cooperation of the City planning staff

"It seems to us that the rush to meet Council deadlines before the October Municipal Elections became more important than good planning" says Patrick Smyth of the Avenue Road Eglinton Community Association (ARECA). "It's always the concerns of the community for the community that get swept away when things are rushed in this way, and concerns of the developers suddenly magically find themselves pushed to the fore and are approved by staff and Council in the rush to complete. Our community has been subjected to this kind of residual consideration before."

In their deputations to the North York City Council, members will suggest amendments that they expect will be supported by the local councillor. The matter may continue on to the Ontario Municipal Board if sufficient amendments are not made.

Learn more at ARECA's website - http://www.areca.info/ov_duplex.html

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