
City Council

Notice of Motion

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| MM41.2 | ACTION | | | Ward: All |
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The “Ward” - by Councillor Moscoe, seconded by Councillor Mihevc

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Toronto and East York Community Council. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Moscoe, seconded by Councillor Mihevc, recommends that:

1. Heritage Toronto be requested to undertake a project to revive and celebrate the “Ward”.
2. The City assist by helping with fundraising once a program and budget have been identified.
3. Some Section 37 money, secured from nearby development projects, be applied to this project.

Summary

Toronto prides itself on being a city of neighbourhoods. It also celebrates its cultural diversity and its heritage guidelines specifically direct Heritage Toronto to value and celebrate our city’s cultural diversity.

Toronto neighbourhoods flourish and thrive because they are active, vibrant communities. They are visible and have advocates. Yet, Toronto is very much a product of its past. There are neighbourhoods in Toronto which have virtually disappeared, yet they have contributed so much to our history and diversity. They deserve to be revived and celebrated.

One such neighbourhood is the “Ward”. At the turn of the century it served as the immigrant reception area and was located in the shadow of the new, (now old), City Hall between Teraulley Street, (now Bay Street), and University Avenue. It was as densely populated as the lower east side of New York with as much a history, with one difference. Toronto’s bylaws prohibited high-rise buildings, so instead of tenements, families were crowded into houses, flats and even stables. Many of the households were without indoor facilities or running water.

Most of the population was Jewish with a sizable community of recently arrived Italian and various other new ethnic arrivals. Some 80% of the population were garment workers, employed by Eaton's in their sweatshops located on the south side of Agnes Street, (now Dundas), between Teraulley, (Bay Street) and Yonge Street, north of Albert Street where the Eaton Centre now stands.

A Yiddish Theatre, the Lyric Theatre, was located at the northeast corner of Bay and Dundas, where the Atrium is located, and the largest synagogue sat where the University Courthouse stands at the corner of Armoury Street.

Much of Toronto's present City Hall was built on the remnants of the "Ward" and the Chinatown that replaced it.

(Submitted to City Council on October 26 and 27, 2009 as MM41.2)