

Presentation by the Thistletown Multi-Service Centre Board of Management to the City of Toronto Executive Committee June 28, 2016

On June 27, 1985, Thistletown Middle School closed its doors for student enrollment. Thanks to a group of dedicated residents who lobbied the City of Etobicoke, it became the Thistletown Multi-Service Centre and a community hub for not-for-profit agencies and City Parks programs. This centre was the first of its kind in the 1980's and the model for it has been copied by other community hubs in Toronto.

The Thistletown Multi-Service Centre is vital to our community. The Thistletown Community Centre in 2015 had 16,638 participants in its programs. The community rooms were permitted out a total of 1,815 times with attendees totalling 90,750 people. We have 10 churches who regularly permit out rooms in the centre and have been doing so for a number of years.

The Thistletown Seniors, and the Senior Woodcarvers & Woodchucks programs in 2015 had 11,792 participants. These programs are essential to the seniors in our community as you can see from the comments from the TDSB public meeting.

Aside from the City of Toronto programs, the centre leases out space to non-profit agencies which benefit the community. One of our tenants, the Rexdale Day Nursery had 30,728 people pass through their doors in a 12-month period. Another tenant, Rexdale Women's Centre provides essential services to the community reflected in the fact that during a 12-month period their clients visited the centre 48,772 times. Other tenants include the Canadian Somalian Association, Albion Islington Square Business Improvement Area, Rexdale Soccer and Auberge Francophone. All of these agencies are indispensable to north Etobicoke.

Since Thistletown Middle School was closed in 1985, the Etobicoke Board of Education and since amalgamation, the TDSB have been collecting rent on TMSC building. The cost of the building has probably been more than covered through these lease payments.

The City of Etobicoke and now the City of Toronto has paid for all maintenance, repairs and improvements to TMSC. As the Toronto District School Board is willing to negotiate a sale of the property to the City of Toronto, we believe it's only right all capital improvements to the building paid for by the City should be taken into consideration in the negotiations to purchase.

Last, but most importantly, we would like to discuss the ownership of the Village Green that is on the Thistletown site. The Ontario Act respecting The Board of Education for the Borough of Etobicoke, 1973. Article 6 states "The New Village Green, held by the Board in fee simple, subject to the reservations, limitations, provisos and conditions expressed in the original grant thereof from the Crown and subject to the Easement, is hereby declared to be held by the Board in trust as a park for use and enjoyment by the public generally and the Board shall have no power to convey the New Village Green to be used for any other purpose whatsoever."

The Village Green cannot be sold. The property can be transferred to another owner, such as the City of Toronto, as long as the original trust is maintained. The TDSB does not have the right to sell it for profit. They may be under the impression that they own all the land, but the residents of Thistletown will fight to save this park. It was donated to us in 1896 and was the first public park established in Etobicoke.

The City has received a copy of the 1896 Deed of Land & Trustee Agreement and the revised 1973 Trustee Act showing the Village Green belongs to the community not the TDSB and should just assume the Trusteeship and not incur any cost for the transfer of the park.

The Thistleton Multi-Service Centre Board of Management fully supports the recommendation EX16.21 No. 2a that relates to 925 Albion Road (Thistleton Multi-Service Centre) before the Executive Committee today. We ask that you approve this recommendation.

Our Vice-Chairperson, Suzan Hall will present a petition to the Executive Committee that has been signed by residents in support of retaining TMSC and the services provided. This has been put together in the short amount of time we've had since notification of TDSB's intention.

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