

November 21, 2007

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: Task Force to Bring Back the Don

Subject: Terms of Reference – Task Force to Bring Back the Don

Recommendations:

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don recommends to the Parks and Environment Committee and City Council that the Terms of Reference for the Task Force to Bring Back the Don be adopted, subject to amending:

1. Section 9 by replacing the words “Urban Development Services Department” with “City Planning, Policy and Research” and replacing the words “Department of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism” with “Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division” so that Section (9) now reads as follows:

“9. Staff Support

The Task Force’s agendas and minutes are currently prepared by staff of the City Clerk’s Secretariat Division. The Task Force will be supported by City Planning, Policy and Research and by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, as well as by other staff of the City’s service areas as warranted.”

2. Section 10 by replacing the words “Planning and Transportation” with “Parks and Environment” so that Section 10 now reads as follows:

“10 Reporting:

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don shall report, in consultation with staff, principally to the Parks and Environment Committee, of the City of Toronto Council and to other standing committees, departments, agencies, boards and commissions as required. Joint reporting may be appropriate in some cases, depending on the subject and on departmental and standing committee interests.”

3. Section 11 by replacing the word “four” with “three” and deleting subsection “D” in its entirety so that Section 11 now reads as follows:

“11. Teams:

Members of the Task Force are expected to participate actively on at least one working team. Teams are mandated to implement Task Force programs and decisions, make recommendations to the Task Force, and are required to report on their activities at Task Force meetings. Team Chairs shall be elected by the respective team. Teams are open to full participation by the public.

The location and frequency of team meetings shall be at the discretion of the Chair of each Team and of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don.

Teams will be supported by staff, where possible, with expertise pertinent to the focus of each team meeting.

While the Task Force to Bring Back the Don may modify the number and purpose of Teams according to its priorities, the current structure shall consist of the following three Teams:

- A. Habitat Restoration Team deals with habitat protection, creation, restoration, and stewardship projects and programs plus related City policies.
- B. Communications, Outreach and Marketing Team co-ordinates Task Force communications strategy, including the twice-yearly newsletter, the Task force’s web site, and other publications and media material as required.
- C. Planning/Policy Team deals with land use planning issues and City policies affecting the Don watershed.

Members of the public are welcome to work with any Team.

Issues often discussed by more than one Team.

4. Section 12 by replacing the words “Municipal Act” with “City of Toronto Act, 2006 and Simplified Rules of Procedure for Advisory Bodies” so that Section 12 shall now read as follows:

12. Where a Task Force member or Team member has a pecuniary interest in a matter before the Task Force to Bring Back the Don or before the Team, the member shall declare a conflict of interest before participating in any discussion, and shall not vote on any related motions. In accordance with the provisions of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and Simplified Rules of Procedure for Advisory Bodies, the Task Force and the Teams may close meetings to the general public and to conflicted members.

So that the Terms of Reference shall now read as follows:

1. Goal

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don is committed to “bringing back” a clean, green and accessible Don River within the city of Toronto.

2. Principles

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don operates in accordance to three principles:

- The Task Force is a “citizen-driven” advisory body of City Council;
- The Task Force works with natural processes to bring back the Don;
- The Task Force is committed to working in partnership with all agencies and organizations that share its goal.

3. Mandate

- Educate and involve Toronto’s citizens in the restoration of the Don River Watershed;
- Fundraise and establish partnerships for Don River restoration projects;
- Undertake Don River restoration projects in partnership with City departments, outside agencies, community groups, the private sector, and individual volunteers;
- Act as a watchdog and advise City Council with respect to issues affecting the Don;
- Work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and its Don Watershed Regeneration Council;
- Advise City council with respect to the establishment of City-sponsored stewardship groups in conjunction with other city environmental initiatives;
- Work with community-based stewardship groups from this and other Toronto watersheds on river restoration issues and responses.

4. Composition

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don shall be made up of 23 members, including three Councillors and 20 citizen members who are residents of the City of Toronto and who have a commitment to and interest in the Don River and its watershed. The Chair and Vice-Chair(s) shall be chosen by the Task Force from among the citizen members.

5. Term of Appointment

Task Force members are appointed for the Term of Council, or until their successors are appointed.

The Task Force shall elect a Citizen Chair and Vice-Chair(s) at the beginning of each term, or as determined by the Task Force.

6. Quorum and Attendance

Quorum shall be 9 members.

If there is no quorum present 15 minutes after the start of the meeting, the secretary shall call the roll and record the names of the members present.

In order to be a member in good standing, regular attendance at meetings is required. A member who is absent for three consecutive meetings, without providing the committee with written or verbal notification and reason for such absence, shall be deemed to have resigned from the position.

7. Compensation

Members and volunteers may be reimbursed for approved expenses that are incurred in accordance with city purchasing policies, and that are incurred while engaged in Task Force business.

8. Meetings

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don meetings shall, generally, be held monthly or at the call of the chair, with the provision that at least nine meetings shall be held per year. Meetings are open to the public.

Decisions are reached by majority vote.

The meeting announcement and proposed agenda shall be available through the City Clerk's office according to Clerk's Office policies and procedures.

9. Staff Support

The Task Force's agendas and minutes are currently prepared by staff of the City Clerk's Secretariat Division. The Task Force will be supported by City Planning, Policy and Research and by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, as well as by other staff of the City's service areas as warranted.

10. Reporting

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don shall report, in consultation with staff, principally to the Parks and Environment Committee, of the City of Toronto Council and to other standing committees, departments, agencies, boards and commissions as required. Joint reporting may be appropriate in some cases, depending on the subject and on departmental and standing committee interests.

11. Teams

Members of the Task Force are expected to participate actively on at least one working team. Teams are mandated to implement Task Force programs and decisions, make recommendations to the Task Force, and are required to report on their activities at Task Force meetings. Team Chairs shall be elected by the respective team. Teams are open to full participation by the public.

The location and frequency of team meetings shall be at the discretion of the Chair of each Team and of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don.

Teams will be supported by staff, where possible, with expertise pertinent to the focus of each team meeting.

While the Task Force to Bring Back the Don may modify the number and purpose of Teams according to its priorities, the current structure shall consist of the following three Teams:

- A. Habitat Restoration Team deals with habitat protection, creation, restoration, and stewardship projects and programs plus related City policies.
- B. Communications, Outreach and Marketing Team co-ordinates Task Force communications strategy, including the twice-yearly newsletter, the Task force's web site, and other publications and media material as required.
- C. Planning/Policy Team deals with land use planning issues and City policies affecting the Don watershed.

Members of the public are welcome to work with any Team.

Issues often discussed by more than one Team.

12. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Where a Task Force member or Team member has a pecuniary interest in a matter before the Task Force to Bring Back the Don or before the Team, the member shall declare a conflict of interest before participating in any discussion, and shall not vote on any related motions. In accordance with the provisions of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and Simplified Rules of Procedure for Advisory Bodies, the Task Force and the Teams may close meetings to the general public and to conflicted members.

13. Code of Conduct

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don shall abide by the spirit and intent of the Code of Conduct of the City of Toronto Council.

Action Taken by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don:

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don endorsed the Clean, Green and Accessible statement contained in the communication (December 13, 2006) from the City Clerk.

Background:

The Task Force to Bring Back the Don, on November 21 2007, considered the following:

1. Clause 19, Report 6, Works Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on July 22, 23 and 24, 2003, entitled “Terms of Reference – Task Force to Bring Back the Don”; and
2. Communication (December 13, 2006) from the City Clerk advising that the Task Force to Bring Back the Don at its meeting held on December 13, 2006:
 - i. endorsed, in principle, the communication (Undated) from Janice Palmer, Chair, Habitat Restoration Team, and directed that the following changes to the description of the Teams be referred to the newly constituted Task Force for consideration as possible changes to the Terms of Reference;

While the Task Force to Bring Back the Don may modify the number and purpose of Teams according to its priorities, the current structure shall consist of the following three Teams:

- A. Habitat Restoration Team deals with habitat protection, creation, restoration, and stewardship projects and programs plus related City policies.
- B. Communications, Outreach and Marketing Team co-ordinates Task Force communications strategy, including the twice-yearly newsletter, the Task force’s web site, and other publications and media material as required.
- C. Planning/Policy Team deals with land use planning issues and City policies affecting the Don watershed.

Members of the public are welcome to work with any Team.

Issues often discussed by more than one Team.

- ii. endorsed, in principle, the draft document (November 1, 2006) defining Clean, Green and Accessible, subject to the following amendments:
 - a. by adding the words “Watershed (Don)” after the word “Don” where it appears in the first sentence of the first paragraph; and
 - b. by deleting the word “Valley” where it appears after the word “Don”;

so it shall now read as follows:

“Clean, green and accessible” is a catchphrase that means a great deal to those who wish to bring back the Don Watershed (Don). These words

generally mean to us what they mean to the general public. However, a few issues need to be clarified:

Clean – Clean refers to two somewhat related conditions:

1. Clear of litter and illegally dumped garbage;
2. Free of anthropogenic (human-made) pollutants in the soil, water and air.

We promote initiatives that contribute to the former and we judge initiatives positively that clean up or reduce releases of the latter. Note that releases of pollutants to water or air may occur far from the Don. Therefore, we may provide advice to the city on developments, projects or activities anywhere in the watershed of the Don.

Green – Green in the context of the Don means biologically diverse and healthy. We promote biodiversity in the Don, not simply anything that is coloured green. Because native plants tend to create conditions that optimize species diversity, we are selective in stewarding plant species native to the local region. While we are sensitive to challenges that come with urbanization, we wish to “mend the web of life”, as much as possible; therefore, we advise against and reject, the introduction of species to the Don, that are not native or that are invasive. We frequently attempt to control such species.

In addition, we support measures that minimize impacts related to anthropogenic activities in the watershed. Such measures may include, for example, low impact development and the consolidation of infrastructure located in the valley. In general, we apply a net gain principle in order to strive to achieve the highest overall benefit for the valley.

Accessible – We encourage the opening of the Don to low-impact human access. We discourage high-impact accessibility (generally meaning “motorized”) because generally it impairs the Don for other uses, yielding a net loss. Accessibility is not an absolute goal; we may promote the creation of “sanctuaries” in certain locations that are inaccessible to humans for the benefit of wildlife. However, in general, we believe that human contact with the natural environment in the Don can create conditions that are positive for all creatures – human and non-human – that use the Don. We promote access for all people, acknowledging that differences in abilities may create differences in the extent and mode of access that is desirable or possible.

- iii. directed that the foregoing draft communication be distributed to the new Task Force Members as part of their Orientation Package.

City Clerk

Item No. 1
Att.

