



The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

His Worship Mayor Rob Ford and Councillors

Office of the Mayor
Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

February 24, 2013

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Directors

Nancy Baines
George W. Beal
Matthew Blackett
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Dr. Carl Benn
Jo Ann Pynn
David Spittal

Fort York National Historic Site and CNE Casino

The Friends of Fort York and The City of Toronto have co-operated since 1994 to support and ensure the future of the Fort York National Historic Site. In planning for the Fort and its precinct, care has been taken to respect the Fort and the 43 acres that make up the National Historic Site. Fort York is the City of Toronto's ancestral home, established in 1793 where people had been meeting and trading for centuries. It comprises Canada's largest collection of original War of 1812 buildings, and a new Visitor Centre, now under construction, is to open in 2014.

Engaging a broad stakeholder community, the Friends of Fort York, with City staff, have collaborated in initiatives with developers to foster building and landscape designs conducive to vibrant communities around the fort, while reflecting our shared history. Fort York has grown into its modern role as downtown Toronto's newest city park, with historical programming and the support of individuals, foundations and corporations. This park is soon to be complemented by neighbouring June Callwood Park. A casino on the grounds of Exhibition Place could impinge upon the character of the emerging neighbourhood, the public realm and family environment.

On April 27, 2013, Toronto will commemorate the bicentennial of the Battle Of York, the 200th anniversary of the American invasion of Toronto, with events involving representatives of the combatant groups, military and First Nations participants. Much of the open space of Exhibition Place constitutes an intact battlefield, potentially containing important archeological deposits from the Battle of York. Its scope and importance to Canada and the United States, including First Nations, has become clearer as a result of recent research arising from the War of 1812 bicentennial. A careful and staged exploration of the battlefield could be precluded by a casino construction schedule that fails to provide the needed time for study.

Finally, the Fort York neighbourhood already is in the midst of substantial development: Ontario Place is a candidate for re-working; a hotel development at Stanley Barracks is moving ahead; the future of the Ordnance lands is being planned; and the area is seeing rapid residential development. A casino in this mix could cause new problems, including transportation and parking, rather than addressing existing ones.

We look forward to working with you to celebrate the past and future of Fort York and its neighbourhoods.

Sincerely,



Stephen Otto



Harriet De Koven

Co-Chairs – Friends of Fort York