



LAURA ALBANESE, MPP

York South-Weston

11/04/2015

Etobicoke York Community Council
Etobicoke Civic Centre
Main Floor, 399 The West Mall
Toronto, ON M9C 2Y2

RE: Item EY10.1 22 John Street, 33 King Street and 2 Elsmere Avenue (The Weston Community Cultural Hub)

Dear Chair and Members of the Council:

I am writing to you to express my support for the redevelopment application put forward for this site by The Rockport Group.

The proposal incorporates many of the suggestions heard from the local community during the Weston 2021 Initiative in 2011. This process was coordinated by the City of Toronto through Councillor Nunziata and saw the participation of Metrolinx. The aim was to envision opportunities for the revitalization of Weston Village, specifically around the new GO and UP Express station, the old GO station, the Toronto Parking Authority lot, the Weston Farmer's Market and the upcoming John Street Pedestrian Bridge.

One of the main concerns we heard, particularly during the Weston Design Charette, which was part of the Weston 2021 initiative, was the question about safety in the area of the John Street parking lot after the street would be closed to vehicular traffic. The concerns raised about the empty parking lot with less street traffic which had the potential to become an area of increased crime resonated with me. This project not only gives Weston a chance to dramatically improve this area but is also a catalyst for transformation. Instead of an empty parking lot and street, there is now a vision for community building with a vibrant cultural hub and community space.

The idea of a cultural hub was always favourable within the community. The Rockport Group has incorporated the idea of the cultural hub into their design and has partnered with Artscape to offer affordable live/work units for artists while, taking into account the needs of the Weston Farmer's Market.

The Weston Farmers Market is very important to myself and to the community. The Farmer's Market is a unifying presence in Weston which celebrates a deep history and sense of community. This project envisions a modernized market; it has the potential to add to its success and attract new vendors, while accommodating current vendors.

I also welcome the presence of Artscape with affordable live/work housing for artists. With Artscape's successful track record of building communities within the City of Toronto, I believe they will be a promising addition to Weston.

The project also incorporates the use of the commercial portion of 33 King Street which has been sitting empty for almost 40 years, and finally has a chance to be revitalized.

While I am aware of the concerns of the height of the building, I believe that the majority of the community is excited about this project because it offers a renewed vision for Weston through new infrastructure and development. This project will bring a new sense of energy and will reinvigorate the local community.

I trust that this redevelopment application will be given due consideration, and look forward to a new cultural hub and partnership with Artscape in the Weston community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Albanese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning of the first name.

Laura Albanese, MPP
York South-Weston