

FRIENDS OF KENSINGTON MARKET**SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS**

36 Bellevue Ave., Kensington Market, Toronto ON M5T 2N4 / friendsofkensingtonmarket@gmail.com

Sept. 22, 2016

Re: EX17.31 Supporting Small and Independent Businesses in Kensington Market

Dear members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the request for City staff to do research on the best ways to help “raw food vendors/grocers and other small retail businesses in Kensington Market and to report back to the Committee with their findings.”

Kensington Market is an eclectic, fascinating neighborhood beloved by Torontonians. It is also one of the last open aired markets in North America, a unique and irreplaceable part of Toronto. The backbone of the market is and has always been the small independent stores, especially the purveyors of raw food: fruit stands, fishmongers, butchers and other grocers. These small stores, many generations-old and family-run, are fragile. As we speak, another food retailer in Kensington, Zimmerman’s Freshmart, is closing shop.

Kensington Market needs to support the small independent retail businesses that make the neighborhood livable and an interesting place to visit. Part of what makes the neighborhood great is precisely the mix of small independent stores, services and a strong community of residents.

According to studies cited in the Staff Report “Kensington Market Study of Restaurant and Bar Uses – Preliminary Directions and Next Steps”, between 2012 and 2002:

“Food related businesses (excluding restaurants but including supermarkets, grocers, specialty food stores” declined from 61 to 42 businesses”

“Food services (restaurants and ‘drinking places’ as reported by JC Williams, 2014) increased from 35 to 63 businesses. Of these, 9 were classified as ‘drinking places’ specifically in 2002 and 7 were identified in 2012”

“A balanced pedestrian shopping are in terms of the retail mix and diversity of businesses is generally considered to be 30% retail merchandise, 15% to 20% convenience, 20% food services and 20% other services”

The study says that Kensington is currently at 23% market share in food services, but the balance is shifting towards bars and restaurants. With bars comes noise, less retail that sustains a neighborhood, and a less attractive place to be and visit.

We ask the Committee to approve this request for City staff to do research on the best ways to help “raw food vendors/grocers and other small retail businesses,” in Kensington Market and to report back to the Committee with their findings.” Our best hope for Kensington Market is to find ways to support the food sellers that make it a market before it disappears.

Thank you.

Dominique Russell
Chair, Friends of Kensington Market