



**Grange Community Association**  
[www.grangecommunity.ca](http://www.grangecommunity.ca)

March 27, 2017

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

Re: Item: 23.52 - Ceremonial dedication – Harriet Boulton Smith Way

The Grange Community Association has initiated a program of laneway naming and ceremonial dedications within the Grange Community in Ward 20.

This rationale for the ceremonial naming of this particular part of John Street, from Queen to Stephanie are outlined in the staff report.

This proposal is part of our general plan for the revitalization of Grange Park which includes a walkway which will connect to John Street, thereby enhancing the goal to give priority to pedestrians on John Street from Stephanie Street all the way south to Front Street.

The commemoration of Harriet Boulton Smith has the support of local residents who live on the street, as well as owners of the commercial properties, the Art Gallery of Ontario and residents of the neighbourhood.

The commemoration also recognises the philanthropy of the Boulton family who over the course of time gifted a number of properties on and near to John Street for St. George the Martyr Church, Harrison Baths, St. Patrick's Market Square and St. Patrick's Market.

This philanthropy was generous and has had long term benefits for the immediate neighbourhood.

In addition to this, we will be asking and have already asked for the following:

- Naming the south walkway in Grange Park as Harriet Boulton Walkway;
- Naming of several lanes. We are in the process of obtaining letters of support for:
  - o Silverstein Lane
  - o Underground Railroad Lane
  - o Philip Judah Lane
  - o Russell Creek Lane
  - o Draft Dodger Lane.

The background for these names are founded in the attached Appendix and applications have already been submitted to Transportation Services.

We look forward to your approval.

Ceta Ramkhalawansingh  
 Honorary President, Grange Community Association  
 Convenor, Grange Laneway Naming Project

## ***APPENDIX – Proposed laneway naming – Grange Neighbourhood***

### **1. Laneway naming – “*Silverstein Lane*”**

We request that the un-named east west laneway between Henry Street and McCaul Street north of Baldwin Street be renamed “*Silverstein Lane*”.

Three generations of the Silverstein family have been operating the Silverstein Bakery since 1918. This business which was begun by the late Kalman Silverstein has been a significant fixture in the Grange neighbourhood for nearly 100 years. The Silverstein family has initiated this request which is supported by the community.

### **2. Laneway naming – “*Underground Railroad Lane*”**

We request that the un-named east west laneway between Beverley and John St be named “*Underground Railroad Lane*”.

Not only was the Grange neighbourhood the site of one of the earliest black businesses in the City but it was also the home to churches which were favoured by the Black community. Among the residents who attended the St. George the Martyr Church were leaders such as William Hubbard and Wilson Ruffin Abbot.

William Hubbard is an important figure in Toronto’s history becoming the first person of African descent to be elected to City Council in 1893, and who also served as Acting Mayor of Toronto.

Another important institution in the Grange neighbourhood was the church which was at the south west corner of Soho and Phoebe Streets. This was the building in which many meetings of the Underground Railroad were held, as well as meetings of the Railway Porters. The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints was built in 1906-7 and subsequently purchased by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1929.

In October 1997, City Council approved a rezoning for the site and noted that a commemorative Black History program should be implemented and authorised the allocation of Section 37 funding for this purpose. This commemorative project was not realised. Therefore, this is a very small step to recognise this important heritage feature of the neighbourhood.

An impressive history of the Underground Railroad is contained in *The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto* (2002) by Adrienne Shadd, Afua Cooper and Karolyn Smardz Frost.

### **3. Laneway naming - “*Phillip Judah Lane*”**

We request that the un-named east west laneway north of Queen Street from Beverley to Soho be named “*Phillip Judah Lane*”.

As noted above, the heritage of the Grange neighbourhood included significant activities involving the Black community. Phillip Judah was the son of Adolphus Judah, who along with the Abbott family were key opponents of slavery and racial oppression and encouraged Black Torontonians to participate in the political life of the city. Phillip Judah operated “a fancy green grocery store at the northwest corner of Beverley and Queen”. The building, although remodelled, remains standing.

4. Laneway naming – “*Russell Creek Lane*”

We request that the un-named laneway that runs south from Sullivan, parallel to Beverley Street be named “*Russell Creek Lane*”.

For many years, Donald Nethery (now deceased) an archivist who founded the Grange Historical Society during the City of Toronto’s Sesquicentennial year (1984) studied the natural heritage of the Grange neighbourhood.

Mr. Nethery determined that Russell Creek was one of many underground waterways in the city, and that part of it flowed along this laneway. The site [www.LostRivers.ca](http://www.LostRivers.ca) notes that “Russell Creek is probably the most lost stream around; only slight slopes are visible and the sewers were laid along the streets, crossing, rather than following, the old creek bed. The area has, however, abundant historic sites, as it was the first part of the city where working farms gave way to urban uses.”

5. Laneway naming: “*Draft Dodger Lane*”

We request that the un-named laneway that runs east-west from Huron Street north of Phoebe Street be named “*Draft Dodger Lane*”.

In 1970 a group of activists leased a building at 15 Huron Street and called it “the Hall”. The initial intention was to operate an arts facility. The Committee to Aid Refugees from Militarism moved into the Hall to expand its switchboard message service, provided a Christmas dinner for the “exile” community, and also operated as a free school, a drop-in centre as well as a photo gallery. The “Hall” was an important gathering place for those who left the US to avoid being drafted. The proposed name recognises an important aspect of the community’s social history.