EY28.1 (9:45 AM) Proposed Park in Emery Village - Update on Hydro One Negotiations (Ward 7) - Wednesday February 21, 2018

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This is a matter that is perplexing to many residents in the community.

The intention of this proposal is to create a **First Nations Park** in the **Hydro Corridor** sandwiched between the new Medallion condo towers (3415-3499 Weston Rd.) and Emery Collegiate.

So far, the proposed project has received the unanimous support of the EYCC (September) and City Council (October - notwithstanding the absence of the Ward 7 Councillor whose responsibility it was to present the motion at City Council).

The Emery Village BIA (EVBIA) is to be commended for an initiative to honour our First Nations peoples who greatly contributed to the history of the area, long before the early pioneers.

The problem today is the questionable intent or motivation to place this First Nations Park and a possible museum in a Hydro Corridor. There are far more appropriate locations to honour the First Nations Peoples in Ward 7. Lindy Lou Park and Rowntree Mills Park are two suggestions that are presented here.

According to Ms. Farina, Executive Director of the Emery Village BIA (EVBIA) in her May 17th letter, submitted September 6 to the EYCC, in support of the Hydro Corridor on Weston Rd.,

> The Ontario Archaeological Sites Database (OASD) maintained by the Ontario Ministry of Culture has identified the site as Ak Gv-12. While documented information about this site is almost non-existent, there is considerable archeological reportage **on nearby sites** (emphasis added) that can assist in creating an ethnographic profile of the era when this site was used.

Hydro One has raised serious concerns about the Hydro Corridor as a site for a proposed First Nations Park:

> Electric and Magnetic Fields occur through the use or transmission of electricity. While levels have been found to be very low in the average household, levels are much higher around power lines. **Toronto Public Health recommends against locating anything within the hydro right-of-way that would encourage citizens to linger in the area and be exposed to higher levels of EMF.** Hydro One also requires EMF studies to be completed of the proposed area before agreeing to any license, which **limits parkland amenities within the hydro ROW to trails, walkways, dog off-leash areas and garden plots** (emphasis added).
>
> Along with the usage restrictions, Hydro One also has strong regulations regarding the addition of anything that has the possibility of conducting electricity, as well as limitations on species available for plantings and a prohibition on the construction of structures.

(Source: *Proposed Park in Emery Village – An Update on Hydro One Negotiations*, December 7, 2017)

Given these serious reservations, why proceed with this initiative in this location where negotiations would have to be conducted with Hydro One? Hydro One certainly doesn't welcome it – it has already **Rejected a roadway** through the hydro corridor.

Ms. Farina noted above in her letter that there is archaeological evidence of First Nations' activities **in other nearby locations**. Why not explore them?

It should also be noted that there has been **NO input from the Ward 7 resident community to solicit its support for the park**. **This proposed project is exclusively the creation of the EVBIA and the Ward 7 Councillor** who have included The First Nations Park **as an integral part of the negotiations between the City and the Medallion Corp. At stake is $1 000 000 of S. 37 Community Benefits arising from Phase 2 of the proposed condo development by the Medallion Corp**. at Weston Rd. and Finch Ave (**3415-3499 Weston Rd.**). The focus of these Community Benefits is the *Emery Village Secondary Plan* which includes The First Nations Park that the Councillor and the EVBIA have envisioned. **(http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EY26.10**

Proposed Alternative Site Locations for a First Nations Park

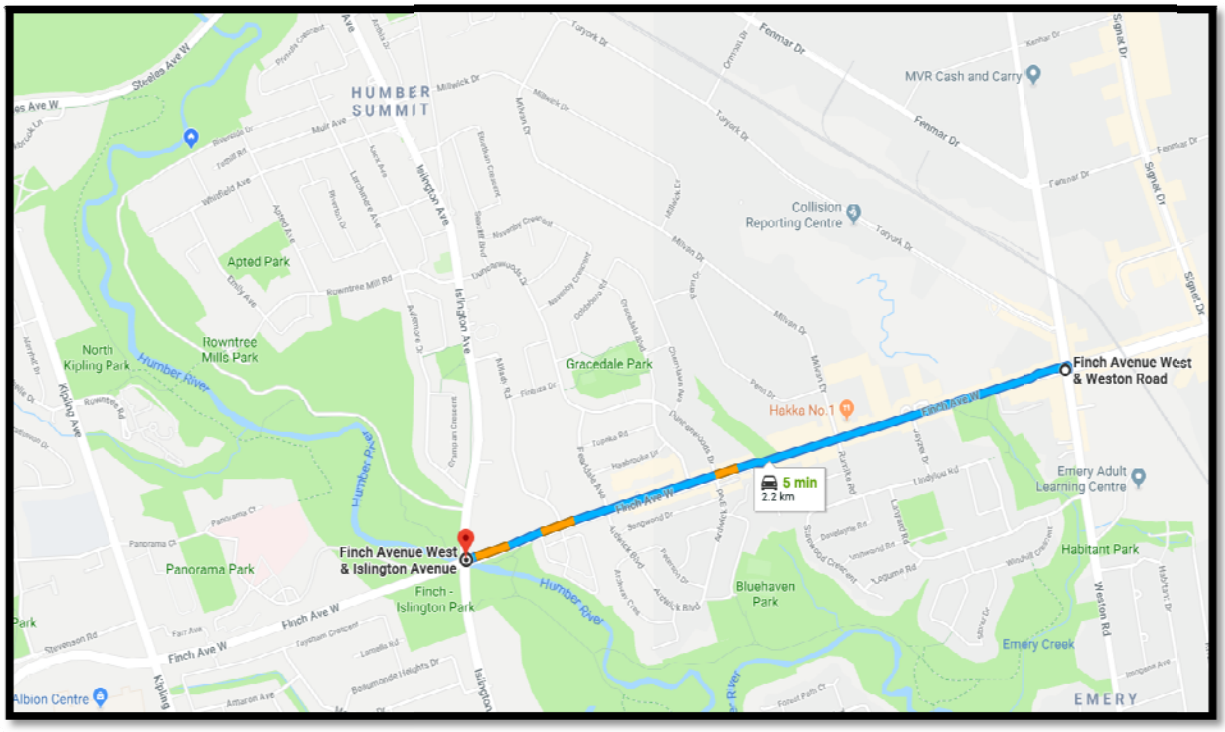
1. Lindy Lou Park

This is a large nearby park located across Weston Rd. from the Hydro Corridor. It stretches from Weston Rd. to Finch Ave. W.; it has wide open spaces, play areas and pedestrian access. Our First Nations peoples could be appropriately recognized here in the manner conceived by the EVBIA. **Photos of Lindy Lou Park are attached**.



2. Rowntree Mills Park

Although located 2.2 Km. west, Rowntree Mills Park would be an ideal location. The park is **92 hectares** and the Humber River runs through it; it has a paved road that serves as a wide bike trail and pedestrian walkway, picnic areas, play areas and 2 pedestrian bridges presently under restoration. Currently, only the first parking lot is open between the May and October long weekends, due to the Councillor's actions to restrict access, dating back to 2008. An historical centre would serve throughout the year as a worthy tribute to our First Nations peoples and an excellent use of an invaluable natural resource of the City of Toronto. There has been much evidence that First Nations peoples employed the Humber River as a major transportation artery for centuries, long before Étienne Brûlé, the first European explorer, navigated these waters in the early 1600s. **Photos of Rowntree Mills Park are attached.**



2.2. Km. - 7 minutes by bus; 5 min. by car to Rowntree Mills Park from Weston Rd. and Finch Ave. (google maps)

With either of these two parks, no negotiation with Hydro One would be required. The costs would be significantly less. **More importantly, the health of visitors would not be at risk.**

Although the EVBIA has reached out to three First Nations Groups - the Huron Wendat (Quebec), Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of New Credit who have approved in principle the proposal for the Park as a gesture of Reconciliation – it seems that the only proposed location that was offered was the Hydro Corridor on Weston Rd. Why a hydro corridor? Frankly, this seems unworthy, if not bizarre. Surely, we can do better than that.

Councillors, it is appropriate to honour our First Nations Peoples in Ward 7, but to present them with a hydro corridor as the location to do it, is an affront to their dignity. If a First Nations Park is serving as a bargaining tool to obtain S. 37 Community Benefits to implement the *Emery Village Secondary Plan* - a creation of the Emery Village BIA - then this is a disingenuous initiative and an affront to the goodwill of the residents of Ward 7 and the City of Toronto.

Lindy Lou Park and especially Rowntree Mills Park are far superior alternative locations and should be explored for their suitability. Thoughtful discussion should ensue that engages the First Nations Peoples and the Ward 7 community.






A CITY WITHIN A PARK
Rowntree Mills Park
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