

October 24, 2021

**TO:** City of Toronto Executive Committee

**RE:** First Parliament Site and Expropriation of City Owned Lands by Metrolinx for Transit Purposes

**AGENDA ITEM:** EX 27.8

**RECOMMENDATION (extract):** The Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office, and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommend that:

1. City Council authorize the City to accept the advance payments of compensation offered by Metrolinx, without prejudice to the City's right to make a claim for further compensation, pursuant to Section 25 of the Expropriations Act for the expropriated properties at 271 Front Street East, 25 Berkeley Street and part of 44 Parliament Street, in the amounts set out in Confidential Attachment 1 and direct it to the Land Acquisition Reserve Fund (XR1012).

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) is a not-for-profit community organization incorporated in 1982, which represents the interests of 30,000+ people who live in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. It is a founding member of the West Don Lands Committee.

SLNA is a member and community Co-Chair of the First Parliament Working Group, the stakeholder process created under EX23.3 (¶7) and referenced on page 4 (¶3) of the Staff Report. It is also a member of the Local Advisory Committee created by Infrastructure Ontario in July 2021 and referenced in that same paragraph.

SLNA is generally aligned with the City in its pursuit of a robust, respectful and workable TOC development on the First Parliament site. There are, however, two areas where SLNA's position differs from that expressed in the Staff Report.

a) Community Benefit Priorities:

- i. **Parkland:** The Staff Report (p 4) includes a long list of priorities. SLNA has emphasized consistently that the most important community priority is the provision of the maximum amount of parkland possible – ideally, as a minimum, the 44 Parliament St. parcel already so designated (Staff Report, pg 16-17: "*as re-designated from Regeneration Area to Parks at its meeting of July 4, 2017, and subsequently rezoned from Residential to OR (Open Space – Recreation) on May 5, 2021*"). It is SLNA's position that parkland should not be traded for or reduced in exchange for other community benefits.

Therefore, SLNA encourages both Executive Committee and Council to explore all available options, including extraordinary approaches, to ensure that the 44 Parliament St. parcel remains an open public space within the First Parliament TOC Development. Further, that this objective not be supplanted by other community benefits considerations.

- ii. **District Library:** The Staff Report identifies a securing a “new” District Library on the site as the third priority. There is no question that this is a valuable and long sought community benefit. It was approved by Council for this site in 2013 with a then projected 2016 start date.

Unfortunately, subsequent delays in finalizing and implementing the First Parliament Master Plan and the very recent reality that the site has now been expropriated by the Province for its TOC development have pushed the reality of a District Library much further into the future.

If the construction of the Ontario Line were to proceed with *no delays of any kind* along the way, it would be a minimum of ten to twelve years before a District Library could be opened on the site. The community wants to explore opportunities to shorten this extended timeline significantly and thereby avoid a temporary relocation to a smaller facility that would deliver, in the interim, only a portion of the full set of “district” services contemplated.

Therefore, SLNA requests that the Executive Committee encourage a parallel approach to siting and building a suitable library facility that could deliver a District Library to the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood at an earlier date.

- b) Use of the Proceeds of Disposition of the First Parliament Properties (271 Front Street East, 25 Berkeley Street and the north portion of 44 Parliament Street):

The Staff Report Staff Report (p 12) recommends that *“net proceeds from the sale or disposition of real estate assets, including compensation as result of expropriation, are to be deposited in the Land Acquisition Reserve Fund to fund future capital requirements, as per the "Policy Governing Land Transactions Among City Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Departments and Proceeds from Sale of Surplus City Owned Real Property" “.*

SLNA takes exception to this approach for the following reasons:

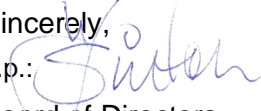
- i. The First Parliament Properties are not surplus lands;
- ii. The First Parliament Properties were carefully assembled into public ownership for very specific and well enunciated civic and community purposes;
- iii. As a result, there was no revenue expectation attached to the First Parliament Properties.



This is a unique, unprecedented and perhaps never to be repeated process – expropriation, by a higher order level of Government, of City owned land which had been assembled and planned for a very specific community purpose. In that context, achieving the best outcome for the Community should not be compromised by forcing the City’s actions and reactions to conform to conventional policies and procedures (such as those identified in this recommendation) which were neither designed for, nor are appropriate for this specific case.

SLNA requests and strongly recommends that, at a minimum, a substantial portion of the net proceeds from the sale of the First Parliament Properties be specifically earmarked for and be used to obtain, on a first priority basis, the maximum public benefit for the First Parliament site – a benefit which in its totality respects the spirit of the Master Plan, the original objectives of the City for this site, and the wishes of the community.

SLNA appreciates your consideration of its input on this agenda item.

Sincerely,  
p.p.: 

Board of Directors  
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

cc: Mayor John Tory (Chair)  
Members of Executive Committee:  
Paul Ainslie                      Ana Bailão  
Gary Crawford                  Jennifer McKelvie  
Denzil Minnan-Wong          James Pasternak  
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