

# HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To: City Council

Re: EXE 29.3

March 21, 2026.

Dear Councillors,

The community is grateful for the offer of a grant of \$50 million and continuing care from the Weston Foundation in memory of Lieut. Gov. Hilary Weston. Her concern for Queen's Park North and that of her family, is evident and applauded.

The communities and the actual proposal remain on a collision course. Between staff, the proponent and the communities, there is too much work to do to responsibly meet the present May 6 deadline.

Our recommendation for this council is approve the negotiation of the grant, but defer the rest of the item back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee beyond the present May 6 date.

**Time has become the enemy of a good result.**

Opposition to the design ideas remains solid.

After many meetings, there has been no change in that programme nor clarity on impacts on the forest and its significant trees. Visions clash between the design team that seeks a destination park with lots of elements and the community that sees the park as a forest that confers respite for residents in the busiest urban area of the downtown. It does not need to be made a place, it is a place, a destination in and of itself. On March 5, at a community meeting unveiling an additional element, not a single person spoke in favour of the proposed vision.

On March 10, Members of the Executive Committee and the following day the City's Design Review Panel raised major concerns that aligned with those of the community. Too busy. Too much. What about the Forest?

Six days later, staff said all programme elements were under the microscope, but was unable to say what elements of the proposal, if any, might be cut. Not so, the project

designer. After eight months of consultation and universal negatives from a general public meeting March 5, and the interventions of councillors and the Design Review Panel March 10 and 11, the project designer remained staunch in defence of the 3 m. high tree walk through the most sensitive area and the 3000 square foot restaurant/washroom complex. Plans for other elements were beyond discussing because drawings did not include information on the impacted trees.

The community position is clear: responsible stewardship requires all elements of the plan first be tested against a credible Forest Management Plan, so elements can be struck or amended where they are destructive to the forest. In addition, at minimum, plans for a very large restaurant complex (that includes storage for Parks equipment and washrooms) on a large footprint including a half basement should not go forward if there is insufficient evidence it will succeed.

A week ago, there was agreement from staff to circulate a Forest Management Plan and a feasibility study for the restaurant. Date of delivery is unknown. It is not clear whether either is complete.

The role of heritage to protect the heritage landscape of the park is still under study.

Finally, the governance structure should not be approved in the present motion to council. This, too, is premature. There has been minimal discussion on the role the community might play in the future governance of the park, which now includes University of Toronto and the Parks Department in undefined roles. An ongoing community voice, including independent oversight is central to defining what is done to such a treasured asset particularly when the Forest Management Plan will involve ongoing implementation going forward as much as 50 years.

We seek Council's help to turn the heat down in this process.

Do everyone a favour and give us at least another month to resolve these concerns.

Best wishes

Sue Dexter,

Board Member,

Harbord Village Residents' Association.

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