

## **The Neighbours**

### **Is it a flagpole, eyesore, danger or ...**

On November 8, 2007, our mail contained an unaddressed Admail (Canada Post definition) business envelope containing a “PUBLIC NOTICE – PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY”. This notification began the saga that continues as a concern of the many Villagers who oppose the location of the facility, and of a church that sees no reason why the community should be concerned. By far the overwhelming response, when hearing the story of this proposed installation, is shock and bewilderment that the church decided to lease space to Bell Mobility without any interaction with their neighbours. Under olde “Common Law” there is an element called “Quiet enjoyment” that a vast majority of us understand as a “God given right”. We, the neighbours, feel that the “quiet enjoyment” of our homes, property and community is threatened by a group that professes strong ties to God, while having no right, moral or ethical, to impose this installation on us.

The neighbours began the campaign in mid-November to change the proposed location of the telecommunications facility. Many thanks to the canvassers and signers of the Support Petition who have provided us with the documented support needed to convince Toronto City Council that the community is opposed to the proposed location of this telecommunications facility. On January 30, Toronto City Council passed the “Motion of Impasse” moved by Councillor Ainslie on our behalf, which will next be sent to Industry Canada.

There continues to be a great deal of misinformation on the many elements involved with this proposed installation.

The neighbours’ position is to have the proposed Bell Mobility telecommunication facility installed in a more appropriate location.

To recap the neighbours’ concerns with the proposal:

- This was a unilateral decision by one group that impacts all surrounding residents including direct economic impact on adjacent and nearby property values.
- There are many concerns about the long-term health effects from electro-magnetic and/or unknown radiation on residents and students with three schools, three daycare facilities and more than 200 homes within 1,000 feet of the proposed facility; reference: Toronto Health – Prudent Avoidance Policy (Nov. 2007) and Vancouver School Board (2005) incompatible land use within 1,000 feet of schools.
- The possible health impact on those in the area who may have electro-magnetic sensitivity syndrome (1-4%).
- The unsightly esthetic effect on the village from the installation of the flagpole/tower, twice the tree canopy height, and noise from cables and flag.
- The lack of control by the land use authority on any upgrades or expansion of the facility.

Beginning on November 10, we tried many times to engage the church in a discussion on the “whys” of this proposal with no response. On December 3, we sent a letter to Councillor Ainslie requesting he inform Industry Canada that there is an “Impasse” and that Industry Canada intervene on our behalf.

Following the “Public Information Session” on December 4, we sent a letter to the church requesting they reconsider their position of leasing to Bell Mobility. Their response to us on December 14 was to suggest a meeting of two or three representatives of the church, Bell Mobility, Industry Canada, GVCA and the neighbours. We responded with a request that the meeting be limited to members of the community, a less formal, more intimate discussion. In their email response to us on January 5, it was made clear by their agenda that the church would not reconsider its position at the scheduled January 9 meeting with Bell Mobility, etc. We respectfully declined to attend, but reiterated we are still prepared to attend an informal meeting with an open agenda to discuss our positions. As it happened neither Bell Mobility nor Industry Canada attended, the meeting and we as a community were unable to have a dialogue.

On January 15, at the GVCA executive meeting, the church read a Letter to The Guildwood Village Community containing the following statement “we see no adverse effects to the erection of this tower.” The position of the Church Session is abundantly clear: there is no need for the neighbours to be concerned and they will continue with the flagpole antenna installation.

In reviewing the past nearly three months of rhetoric, it is clear that most of this “problem” could have been prevented if the City of Toronto had responded to the 1995 Industry Canada request that “Land Use Authorities” create protocols for cellular telecommunications facilities. Throughout this period, we have received positive and helpful support from the Feds – MP John McKay and Industry Canada.

Let us as neighbours in one of the best “Villages” in the City drop our egos and altruistic stances and work together for the betterment of all.

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