

Transportation Committee – Tom Scott

A number of matters of interest have arisen since the last virtual meeting:

1. An e-letter regarding our concerns about information received during the third Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting for the Greenfield/Main/Hawthorne project, as set out in the December 2020 meeting and confirmed at our January 2021 meeting, was sent to Mayor Watson on January 18, 2021. A notice of receipt was received from Mayor Watson's office the same day.
2. Mathieu Gravel replied for the Mayor on February 9th with copies sent to the members of our Transportation Committee and other City-of-Ottawa staff members. His reply for the Mayor reversed the order of priority we had set out where undergrounding utilities came first and safety and security was listed last. Despite our series of arguments for undergrounding, his reply noted it as aesthetics. We shared this reply with the Councillor and also set out a proposed response. In M. Gravel's letter, he offered to have the discussion be expanded to include additional staff from Transportation Planning and Infrastructure Services.
Bruce Kenny, Manager of the Municipal Design and Construction Branch, was copied on this email. He was to be in contact with OOECA to facilitate additional and ongoing discussion regarding our outstanding concerns. The Councillor recommended waiting for this contact before responding again to the Mayor.
3. On February 24th Hydro Ottawa also responded to our enquiries about their policies on burying lines whenever new projects were being developed or when there was major reconstruction, as is seen in the recent policy in Nova Scotia, and as was the case on Elgin Street and would be the situation for the GMH project. This response was shared with the OOECA chair and with the Councillor's office.
4. Bruce Kenney e-mailed on February 25th to make arrangements to discuss the letter to the Mayor and next steps. A ZOOM meeting was scheduled with Mr. Kenney, Mr. Patrick Sammon and Mr. Jonathan Knoyle for March 3rd.
5. At the same time and separately, the Councillor was developing a motion regarding the undergrounding of utility lines on Hawthorne and informed us on February 26th. [A notice of motion was tabled at the City's Transportation Committee meeting on March 3, 2021]. As chair of the OOECA Transportation Committee, I raised a concern that the undergrounding of wires had become a priority over safety and security concerns raised in our letter to the Mayor and

that there appeared to be no resolution in sight for those issues raised, especially for cyclist safety along the west side of Main Street between the 417 overpass and Graham, and at the west end of Graham for crossing Echo and CBD to Pretoria.

6. The scheduled ZOOM meeting was held with Mr. Kenney and company on March 3rd. While we clarified a number of the items raised in the Mayor's letter, we also agreed to disagree on a number of elements, especially those concerning the overhanging safety issues from the Main Street Roadway Safety Audit recommendations. However, the City staff then agreed to come (virtually) to a meeting with the OOECA Transportation Committee to go over these concerns in more detail.

Mr Kenney left it with Mr. Sammon and his consultant team to come up with an agenda and a time convenient to all. Further delays in the project to accommodate significant design changes did not appear to be in the cards. The staff-meeting outcomes were shared with the Councillor's office in anticipation of this evening's OOECA meeting.

7. On a separate note, a survey of citizens' views on snow removal was recently completed by the City. With an aim towards active transportation issues, especially for mobility-challenged individuals, we raised concerns about the City's standards not being met particularly at intersections where snow banks, shuffled from road clearance to sidewalk clearance and back, are seen to create visual and physical barriers, slipping hazards, and now as we can see, creating ponds at these same intersections - such that pedestrians and cyclists are often forced to veer into vehicle driving lanes to avoid getting a soaker or a stream up their backs while negotiating a crossing. Those with strollers, wheeled carts and walkers also facing daunting challenges where they have even more limited options to scaling snow piles or wading through melt-water ponds. Our recommendation was that the City needed to consider in its standards more snow removal and storm-drain clearance, as opposed to simply plowing snow, and especially for improving active-transportation access at conflict intersections.