



**YMCA-YWCA OF NORTHEAST AVALON**

**STRONG FAMILIES CAMPAIGN  
NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATION MEETING  
MEETING NOTES 18 JUNE 2008  
7:30PM 65 RIDGE ROAD**

In attendance:

Craig Rowe – YMCA-YWCA of Northeast Avalon Board and Campaign Cabinet Chair  
Jerry Kirkland – Building Committee Chair  
Greg Dickie – Building Committee member  
Jason Brown – CEO, YMCA-YWCA of Northeast Avalon  
Michelle Northover – Director, Development, YMCA-YWCA of Northeast Avalon  
Jim Case – Architect, Sheppard Case  
Richard Symonds – Architect, Sheppard Case  
Gerhardt Weiland – Landscape Architect, Tract Consulting  
20 individuals from the neighbourhood  
Debbie Hanlon – City of St. John's, Ward Councillor for the area  
Representatives from the Newfoundland and Labrador Francophone Association

- Craig Rowe opened the meeting at 7:35pm. and thanked those in attendance for coming. He noted that there were 1200 invitations to the consultation delivered to homes in the surrounding neighbourhood and that the interest expressed by those present was sincerely appreciated. He then introduced representatives from the Y who were in attendance and described each of their roles.
- Craig talked about the excitement surrounding the project to build the new St. John's Family Y and how pleased the Y is that, in partnership with Pippy Park and the City of St. John's, the best possible site was chosen for the new facility. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to be consultative with the neighbourhood and be proactive. The Y wants to ensure those most affected by the presence of the new facility in their neighbourhood were fully aware of the plans for the project. He explained that the Y was there to listen and share information to mitigate any potential concerns in the best possible way.
- Jerry Kirkland spoke briefly about his role as building committee chair. He reinforced the point that the Y was interested in making the best possible impact on the neighbourhood so feedback would be most welcome. He also outlined the

advantage for the neighbourhood home owners of having a Y so close to their property.

- Jason Brown outlined the two-three year history of the project and the process it took to receive the deed for the property. The City of St. John's bought the land from the Pippy Park Commission and as part of their 1.5 million contribution to the campaign, gifted it to the Y. The Y holds the deed for the property and the new Y falls under permitted use for the land. He talked about the importance of building a Y for the future and our locations in St. John's throughout our history. He also highlighted the following:
  - It is anticipated the new Y will be constructed by 2010
  - Optimistic about government funding announcement very soon
  - Site work may take place in the fall of 2008
  - Hopeful about breaking ground in the spring of 2009
  - There is a campaign underway to raise 2 million in charitable gifts to help build the new Y
- Craig described the work of the communications committee in the development of the Y Strong Families Campaign video which was then shown to the group.
- Richard Symonds explained that the concepts on display are preliminary and he is still in the designing process. Although there were not a lot of detailed drawings at this time the display presented at the meeting gives a good picture of where the building will be on the site. He pointed out that, from an architectural perspective, it is important that the building have a positive impact on the neighbourhood in function, aesthetics, and environmentally.
- Gerhardt Weiland addressed the group and reiterated the fact that tonight's objective was to listen, get ideas for the landscaping to fit into the community and the park setting appropriately. He reviewed some of the landscaping details of the project known to date:
  - Site is 4.5 acres
  - Footprint of the building is approximately 48,000 ft<sup>2</sup>
  - There is a buffer surrounding the property that ranges from up to 100 metres on the Higgins Line side to 30 metres by the French School
  - Vegetation will be saved as much as possible and trees replanted
  - Trail connections will be kept
  - There are a number of environmental initiatives that will be considered to deal effectively with energy conservation, storm waters, run off, etc., like rain gardens and a roof top garden
  - The intent is to build a "green" building and consider LEED certification (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design)
- Richard gave a description of the building and used the designs on display to guide his presentation.

The meeting was then opened for the group to ask questions and make comments.

Questions/Comments raised:

- Will the building be wheelchair accessible? - *Yes*
- When will the groundbreaking take place? - *Not confirmed – tentative for spring 2009*
- Will there be a soccer pitch? Do not wish to see this as part of the plan and was aware of another group considering this. - *No soccer pitch*
- Why does there have to be a 30 metre buffer between the French School and the Y? Could the Y consider using the French School entrance and linking its parking lot to theirs and not have a buffer? - *Requirement by Pippy Park Commission*
- Do not wish to see a large neon, unattractive sign on the building. Would much rather see a discreet, tasteful sign in keeping with the park like setting.
- Is a view of the narrow really plausible given the low placement of the building?
- Concerns were raised regarding the construction process such as noise, dirt, dust, access. - *Contractors will be required to meet regulations regarding minimizing disruptions to residents from construction and this will be written into the contract before agreements are signed.*
- Will there be some sort of buffer between Ridge Road and the parking lot? Do not wish to look across the street and see a parking lot. - *As much as is possible to accommodate.*
- Would much rather see the Y build on the site than anything else such as a Youth Remand Centre.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the City and the impact of the Y on the site, but not with the Y itself.
- Debbie Hanlon, Ward Counsellor of the area introduced herself and said she would be available for feedback after the meeting.
- Will there be integration of services between the French School and the Y? One example would be the sharing of the parking lots. - *Yes – with details to be discussed between the two organizations.*
- Thanks goes to the Y for holding the meeting but would also like to have seen the City hold a meeting. - *The City of St. John's and the Pippy Park Commission are both important partners in the project. They have been made aware of all the plans and have given their approval.*
- Have there been studies done by the City regarding the public impact of the Y building on the site? - *The Y will follow all building code, traffic, zoning, and environmental regulations. This facility is within permitted use for the site.*
- Would like to see a larger buffer and entrance to the building off Higgins Line.
- What will the impact on traffic be? Will the City review bus schedules in conjunction with the opening and closing times of the Y?
- How many staff will be working at the new facility? - *Approximately 100 – 120 at Pippy Park site, many Y staff work off site in program locations throughout the region.*

- How big will the child care centre be? - *The plan is to open a centre with 60 licensed child care spaces with potential to expand to an additional 60 in the future.*
- Consideration should be given to the traffic congestion that may become a problem. The City should be involved in addressing this issue. - *The Y will do whatever it is able to help mitigate traffic concerns and work with the City as appropriate.*
- The traffic coming off the outer ring road onto Ridge Road often exceeds the speed limit. This is something the Y should be aware of as it could become a safety issue.
- There are already parking problems with students from the Marine Institute using the French School parking lot.
- Would like to see the Y go back to the Pippy Park Commission to ask for more land to have the entrance off Higgins Line and not Ridge Road to lessen the traffic impact.
- The Y will have a very positive impact on our neighbourhood – our property values will increase.
- Have been a Y member for 30 years and am extremely happy this is happening. Y is to be commended for its forethought in involving and engaging the neighbourhood in consultation. This will enhance the neighbourhood – very thankful the Y has chosen our neighbourhood.
- Why was this the preferred site of all those looked at? - *Fits with Pippy Park, land was available and zoned for this type of facility, centrally located, fits with Y culture of healthy lifestyle, park like setting and the environmental impact very positive.*
- Will the trees removed for construction be replanted? - *Yes, wherever possible. The plan is to reintroduce native vegetation and keep as much of the existing vegetation as possible undisturbed.*

#### Meeting conclusion

After there were no further questions or comments Craig thanked everyone for coming. It shows they are and have an interest in what goes on in their neighbourhood and the Y wants to be the best possible neighbour it can be.

Craig encouraged people to make comments on the feedback cards provided and if they wanted more information as the project progressed they were welcome to take one of Jason Brown's cards and contact him.

Preliminary concept designs will be on display at 34 New Cove Road June 24, 25 & 26. As more information becomes available it will be posted on the Y website.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.**