

Presentation by Wendy Dennys, Co-chair, Urban Lanes Committee, Overbrook Community Association, Thursday, 16 October 2014:

- Co-chair Robb Wainwright, and Researcher Steve McNamee sent their regrets that they were unable to attend meeting
- Aim of presentation to bring the community up-to-date on “Overbrook’s Invisible Issue”

- **First let’s look at this invisible issue**

- **OVERVIEW**



- Steve McNamee got this map from the City
- Lanes run either side of Queen Mary from North River Road to Queen Mary Street Public School
- We have numbered them 1 to 19

- **BRIEF HISTORY**

- Western portion of laneway network was created at 12:05 pm, 2 August 1911 (103 years ago) on Plan 318
- Only a few houses existed then, mostly summer cottages
- There are stories of “honey wagons” using the lane but it was mostly untraveled
- At some point in the past, utilities were put down the middle of the lane
- This is an invisible cloud that hangs over our heads, pitting neighbour/neighbour

- **Let’s look closer at blocks:**

- There are 19 blocks, basically three types
 - 8 privately owned either side of the lane
 - 3 privately owned on one side, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) owned on the other
 - 8 OCH owned on either side

- **How did Overbrook Community Association get involved?**

- In April 2010, a Queen Mary Street developer was asked by the City to use the lane to bring cars to the homes
- The community strenuously objected and held a meeting
- In early 2013, the City proposed *Urban Lanes Management Policies*
- The OCA asked that untraveled lanes like Overbrook’s be removed from the policies, suggesting different handling of untraveled lanes

- In March 2013, City Council approved the new policies.
- In April 2013, OCA canvassed residents and set up a legal fund.
- In June 2013, the Urban Lanes ad hoc committee was formed
- In August 2013, a survey/questionnaire was delivered to 160 homes; 57 responded; 88% said they would buy land
- Therefore the mandate of the committee became:
- **To pursue the closure of Overbrook's lanes**
 - **as soon as possible**
 - **at minimum cost to homeowners**
- **What has Committee accomplished?**
- Here was a watershed moment:



- **What led up to this aha moment?**
- With support from Councillor Clark, a pilot block was chosen
- In January 2014, he put a motion to Council to instruct staff to produce a report on a purchase price for pilot block
- In order to prepare the report, City required:
 - An application to close lane
 - An application fee of \$4,657 (paid from Councillor's discretionary fund)
 - Signatures of all homeowners on "petition of interest to purchase"
 - Sketch and photos of block
- This was submitted on 24 June 2014
- **After internal and external circulation of the application**
- On Friday, 3 October 2014
- The lane was officially closed!
- **Now what?**
- Closure of pilot block is the first step, purchase is next!
- We are waiting for the City's report on the price
- Councillor contends land holds no value for City – we agree
- In London, ON, the city charged \$1 for similar lane; In Hamilton, ON, \$100
- We suggest \$100 be the limit.
- Then we negotiate the survey cost; we contend it's City property, therefore they should pay.

- There are many issues to be worked out – we need to stay steady and patient
- Purchase of the land on the pilot block has to be completed by 3 October 2015 or closure of the lane is nulled.

- **Life after Pilot Block purchased?**
- Recommend start *preparation* for 7 remaining Type 1 Blocks applications
- **Applications will only be submitted once the pilot block lanes are purchased.**
- Files have been prepared for each block, and block captains and helpers are sought.
- A meeting will be arranged to share the experience gained through the pilot block closure process.
- Pilot Block experience: It takes time, patience and diplomacy to gather the signatures.

- **Down the road?**
- We need to research how to proceed with Type 2 blocks
- We need patience, one step at a time
- Be assured we will get there

- **Reaching the end goal?**
- Closure of Type 3 blocks
- City transfers land to OCH
- This move might be welcomed by both parties!