

March 5, 1987



On Your Agenda

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 7:00 p.m.

Toronto City Hall

Committee Room No. 4

Meeting of the Land Use Committee

This is a critical meeting, where the Committee (composed of City aldermen) will discuss and vote on a by-law to "regulate" private vehicle traffic on the Spit.

YOU MUST ATTEND THIS MEETING. A by-law forbidding private vehicle traffic on the entire Spit would effectively prevent development and privatization. But you must come and show your support. Boaters will be there in force, since they are eagerly demanding car access at all times.

If you want to speak at that meeting, call the Land Use Committee at 392-7033.

The Land Use Committee is to be commended for holding its meeting in the evening so that working people are able to attend.

For more information, call our hot line at 699-6442.

## Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 467, Station J

Toronto, Ontario M4J 4Z2

### Thank You for All Your Efforts

Thanks to all of you who attended the January 23 MTRCA meeting, despite the bitter cold and the very inconvenient time and location. We had a very good show of support, and it was noticed by the media.

Many thanks also to our hard-working members who phoned people to remind them of the meeting, and to those unable to attend who took the time to write the MTRCA.

### MTRCA Board Approves Spit Development

On January 23, the Board of the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) approved the development concept for the Spit by a vote of 11 to 6.

Members of the MTRCA who voted against the development concept are: Lois Griffin and R.M. O'Brien (controllers, Etobicoke), Jack Layton (councillor, Toronto), Helen White (citizen appointee, Toronto), Maureen Prinsloo and Brian Harrison, (city council, Scarborough).

On the other hand, most members who voted in favour of the development concept represent areas that are not part of the Metro waterfront, such as North York, Pickering, Greenwood, etc. Two of them are professed "environmentalists".

Wishes of the majority ignored again  
At the meeting, 33 of 39 deputants, representing more than 100,000 people according to the Toronto Star, spoke against the development concept, as well as 29 of 31 letters sent to the MTRCA.

In spite of all these very articulate presentations -- and in spite of the vast majority of the public asking time and time again to let the Spit evolve as a car-free

Public Urban Wilderness -- the MTRCA is still intent on going ahead opening the Spit to car traffic, development and privatization. And it is asking taxpayers to pay the \$6.4 million development cost.

#### Friends of the Spit Better Concept

Since the MTRCA Board was not presented with a "no development" concept by the staff, we prepared our "Better Concept" and presented it at the January 23 meeting.

Our Better Concept stops private cars at the base of the Spit and provides for a park vehicle all the way to the tip. It allows public access to the embayments (except in nesting season) and Aquatic Park Sailing Club to remain under their present lease agreement. North shore sailing clubs stay at their present location, within a park concept (under consideration) or, alternatively, are relocated on the west side of the THC marina.

Our Better Concept was sent to every MTRCA Board member prior to the meeting, and it was supported by many of the groups at the meeting. Copies are available at \$4.00 each. Send your name and address and a cheque made to Friends of the Spit.

### We Are Continuing the Fight

The struggle to preserve the Spit as a Public Urban Wilderness is far from over.

IN FACT, MORE THAN EVER, YOUR VISIBLE SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL. Attend public meetings, lobby your politicians, write letters, talk to your friends, relatives and co-workers.

Above all, don't lose hope. Friends of the Spit is one of many groups fighting to improve our environment and make our cities greener. And many are successful.

For instance, Backus Wood, the last remnant of Carolinian forest in Southern Ontario, was recently saved from the greed of a "conservation authority" that wanted to open it to logging.

More recently, the Don Valley Brickworks site was saved from development by Friends of the Valley, a citizens group...and by the MTRCA. (The MTRCA will have to spend some \$10 million to acquire the site and preserve it from privatization. Ironically, that same MTRCA wants to spend more than \$6 million to develop and privatize the Spit.)

## Time for Political Action

Three levels of government will be involved in the final decision on the Spit: the City of Toronto, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the Province of Ontario.

### The City of Toronto

The City of Toronto is responsible for applying zoning and deciding policies for use of the land within its Central Waterfront Plan. The Outer Harbour Headland (as the Spit is called in the Plan) zoning and policies are to be discussed at a special meeting of the City Land Use Committee (see over). You MUST attend this meeting

A "no private vehicle" zoning applied to the entire Spit would ensure the car-free environment needed to redress the imbalance on the waterfront, and it would effectively prevent development and privatization.

It is critically important that you contact your city representatives and the Mayor to make your views known, BEFORE THE MARCH 25 MEETING. Call them (their number is in the blue pages at the end of the phone directory under City of Toronto) or write to them at City Hall, Toronto M5H 2N2 (or, better, do both).

You should contact them even if you think they are not sympathetic. As a citizen, you have the right to make your wishes known, and elected officials have the duty to listen to you. This is to their advantage since they should be aware that you are a member of the vast majority of the public wanting to keep the Spit as a development-free, privatization-free and car-free public park.

Our politicians are also keenly aware that there is a public backlash against privatization of the waterfront, as witnessed at Harbourfront and also at parks developed by the MTRCA (such as Humber Bay, Bluffers Parks, and shortly Marie Curtis and Sir Sam Smith Parks).

You can do a lot to educate elected officials on the validity of the Spit as a public unmanicured park, where anybody is free to go to "get away from it all" (cars, noise, pavement, crowds, commercialism). Left to evolve as a natural urban park, the Spit will be a world-class recreational amenity for citizens and visitors and a living laboratory where children and adults can learn about nature and learn to appreciate and respect their environment.

Boating needs can be accommodated at other sites along the waterfront (north shore sailors want to remain where they are, provided they have security of tenure). All it takes is the political will to negotiate alternatives.

### The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto

Metro Council will be voting half the money for developing the Spit (the Province will be financing the other half).

Contact your representative on Metro Council (phone or write, or both) and write to the Chairman of Metro Council, Mr. Dennis Flynn (Metro Chairman's Office, City Hall, Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2).

### The Province of Ontario

The Province will be responsible for half of the development costs. More importantly, the Ministry of the Environment will be performing an environmental assessment of the MTRCA's development plans.

Write to the Premier, the Honourable David Peterson (Room 281, Main Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2) and to the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable James Bradley (135 St. Clair Avenue West, 15th floor, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5) and send a copy of your letter to your provincial representative.

This is an election year, and the Spit IS an election issue. It is part of the overwhelming public concern for preserving, protecting and improving the environment.

## Greening the City, the Wave of the Future

More than 300 city planners, government officials, academics and environmentalists from around the world gathered recently at the International Symposium on the Green City, a three-day conference held at the Civic Garden Centre.

Friends of the Spit was one of the speakers at the Symposium, on a panel with a representative from Tift Farm, a 296-acre Public Urban Wilderness in Buffalo (yes, in Buffalo). Tift Farm is a rehabilitated toxic waste site now recognized as a natural resource.

International delegates were horrified to hear that part of the Spit is to be developed and paved over. One of the keynote speakers, Dr. David Goode, head of the Greater London (England) Ecology Unit

(a government agency) remarked: "The Spit would be one of the cherished places in London. There's no way it would be developed. We've gone way beyond that argument...When it comes to public enquiry in London, we've reached the stage now where nature conservation is argued on par with other land uses like housing, transportation and job creation..."

### Annual Meeting to Be in Late April

Friends of the Spit annual meeting will be held in late April (possibly early May). You will be informed of the date and place in the next newsletter. If you would like a particular topic discussed at the meeting, drop us a note.