

## SVRA History

The SVRA has had several cycles over the past few decades, depending on the issues at stake and residents' concerted efforts to tackle them. The present association's second year began at its AGM in May 2025.

Our most recent incarnation was sparked by a chance discussion during the 2023 mayoral by-election when Barri Cohen told Heather Sloman about her recent and unsuccessful attempts to prevent a zoning change at a property near Dupont and Christie.

"Developers seek out neighbourhoods without residents' associations," she said, "because they figure any resistance will be minimal and easy to overcome." At that moment in 2023, Barri and Heather decided to reach out to our community, to make it a viable force once again, and to exert as much influence as we possibly could over the new developments that were becoming part of our local landscape. Barri, who agreed to become Chair, has not stopped advocating for the interests of our vibrant neighbourhood ever since. Heather Sloman, the SVRA Secretary for the first year, is now the Chair.

With the help of Julie Patricio, we created flyers and posted them throughout the neighbourhood. We also had an intrepid group of volunteers who, thanks to routes demarcated by Jill Lichtblau, distributed them to hundreds of houses.

In the meantime, the first SVRA action focused on 914 Bathurst St., which had been purchased by Stafford Homes. George Patricio and Scott Walters spearheaded this contingent of residents to engage with the City and with Stafford, and in this way, the Planning and Development Committee was born.

Other SVRA members have since performed an array of feats. Ann Mullen formed the Traffic Calming Committee, and compiled the group's contributions into a comprehensive report, which she submitted to the City's Transportation Department.

When City Councillor Dianne Saxe asked the SVRA to provide input regarding parking access around the hockey arena, Susan O'Connor and Aren Fischer canvassed surveyed local residents, businesses, and the Bill Bolton and St. Alban's communities on parking preferences and crafted a response which effectively resolved the issue.

Roberta Scott brought back Seaton Village's beloved pumpkin walk. Local resident Charles Arbez provided a historical lens for understanding Toronto's planning and development policies. City planner Chris Perreira gave a presentation on the current planning approvals process to the Planning and Development Committee. Chris McNeil just kept on doing what he had always done: running the Clinton St. Summer Festival and the very popular neighbourhood music event Open Tuning.

When Jane Wigle agreed to be the SVRA Treasurer, she was happily acclaimed into the role. She has continued to track the money and the memberships to this day. Behind the scenes for more than a year, Roxann Brown and Charlotte Howe started designed this SVRA website in 2024, which now provides links to information on Seaton Village events, city projects and updates on them, in and near Seaton Village. The volunteer webmaster is currently Sal Bayat, while Susan O'Connor is the content editor. The site continues to evolve.

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The first general SVRA meeting in our new incarnation took place in November 2023 at Monseigneur Fraser School. Over 60 people attended with another dozen or so on line. An interim executive was elected, by acclamation, and we consolidated the various committees. A Governance Committee (Lisa Freedman, Howard Law and Sally Thomas) spent countless hours writing and rewriting the bylaws, which were voted on and passed in May 2024. [The SVRA bylaws are available here.](#) As our second anniversary approaches, the bylaws are being updated.

Our neighbourhood may be small, but it has proven to have many active, vocal and committed community members. We have also learned a great deal from the older, larger and vastly more experienced residents' associations which surround us, and continue to try to meet and partner with them.

More recently, we have joined the Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations (FOSTRA) where we hope to have a bigger impact on making our city a more beautiful and livable home for everyone.

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