

February 12, 2016

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: South Parkdale Neighbourhood Group

On behalf of the neighbours north of the Dufferin Gate, we would like to remind the Board of Governors that we are still expecting the closure of Muzik. On October 23, 2015, we submitted, to the Board of Governors and the CEO of Exhibition Place, our issues regarding the operation of this venue. The item was put on hold at that meeting but, we were and, still are concerned about the safety of our neighbourhood and all who visit Exhibition Place.

The neighbourhood is still interested in knowing:

- if the investigation from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission was completed, if so, what were the results?
- if Police Services completed the investigation of the murders on August 4, 2015? Has someone been charged with the murders and injuries resulting from the shootings at Muzik and, on our neighbourhood streets? Has Muzik been investigated for the ineffectiveness of their security during the event and, at other events throughout their lease?
- if the Board of Governors considers the western part of Exhibition Place a “family” area, does the Board believe that Muzik is appropriate for the image of the western area?

We have learned that, at a meeting on February 4th, the City Council requested, the Chief Planner and Executive Director in City Planning, to determine the appropriate actions and conditions necessary to amend the Official Plan for the buildings within the lands designated Parks/Open Space on the Exhibition Place grounds, in order to permit leases in excess of twenty-one years. We hope that this means that the City will continue to own the buildings, art and property in the Parks/Open Space at Exhibition Place. At this point, as we understand, a lease of more than 21 years gives the property and building to the proprietor of the lease. Considering the operational issues that we have identified in the October 23rd submission, this policy directive would grant Muzik the ownership of the Horticultural Building and, a piece of the park at Exhibition Place.

In our issues document and with new information acquired, we learned that since it's inception, Muzik has:

- blocked the beauty of the Horticultural Building by hiding it behind a fence.
- hidden the Statues of the Greek Gods from Exhibition Place visitors.
- impacted the safety of the grounds for neighbours and visitors to Exhibition Place.
- created an unsafe area due to uncontrollable patrons roaming the grounds and destroying neighbourhood properties.
- been part of criminal activity like assaults and murders which are being investigated, as well as, lawsuits filed against Muzik related to acts of violence at the site.

To help us understand the role of the Board of Governors, we looked at the web page and found Chairperson Mark Grimes letter regarding his role as Chairperson of the Board. He states that:

- it is critical for the Board to maintain Exhibition Place as Toronto's key venue for public celebration, large events, festivals, and community events, while protecting its parkland, historical assets and core businesses.
- moving into the future, the Board will provide excellence in customer service; strengthen Exhibition Place as a year-round destination; and ensure our continued financial success.

- he looks forward to lead the Board's efforts in bringing positive results to each key venue.

From this statement, we see that the Board wants to ensure that Exhibition Place is an exciting, safe and prosperous location. If this is so, will there be any recognition of Muzik's disregard for the expectations of the City of Toronto and Exhibition Place.

We believe that the Board of Governors and Exhibition Place do not consider the effects their venues have on the residents who consider Exhibition Place's open spaces their back yard. Since Muzik opened, there have been many issues raised with people in authority because of Muzik's unacceptable operation and unacceptable activities. No one listened or, seemed to care about the well being of our old, established neighbourhood filled with great Toronto residents.

We have learned that Muzik will be hosting an event for the National Basketball Association and, has invested in security for their site. What is being done for the neighbourhood to protect our homes when patrons leave the premises? Over many years, there has been trouble after events and, no one available to provide security for the safety of our residents and their homes.

Due to our ongoing issues with the operation of Muzik, we believe that their lease should not be extended. We also support the City Operational Department's review of the leasing policy and, hope that amendments are presented that will ensure that Exhibition Place does not lose the ownership of the land, the historical buildings and the Statues of the Greek Gods. Exhibition Place and its green space are part of the exceptional beauty of Toronto.

In conclusion, we would like to reference a piece on the privatization of public space published in the British Guardian last year, written by Bradley L. Garrett who is an urban geographer. He concludes that **"we should start systematically mapping out and using these public spaces to raise awareness about what we have – before we lose it"**.

The Communication below was distributed to the Board at its December 4th meeting and is attached for the Board's information

October 23, 2015
Board of Governors
Exhibition Place

Good Morning.

I am here as a member of the South Parkdale Neighbourhood Group. I live just north of the Dufferin Gate. As you may already know, we have, as a group, worked to create two petitions to close Muzik; one on line (245 signatures) and one door to door (90 signatures) which were presented to City Council on September 30th. I brought copies of both petitions for the Board of Governors. We would like you to understand that our neighbourhood has family homes, apartments, group homes and seniors facilities that live in a wonderful, cohesive community bordering the CNE.

You are probably asking why we did this. Our neighbourhood believes that Exhibition Place and the Board of Governors seem to forget that the Canadian National Exhibition grounds are part of an old Toronto neighbourhood. We have families who are third and fourth generation residents in family homes. Many, like myself, have lived in the neighbourhood from 20 to 35 years.

We love living here. When you buy a house or move into an apartment, you hopefully have researched the neighbourhood and appreciate the community events that happen in your back yard. That is what the CNE was considered, our back yard. It had beautiful architecture and a wonderful park near the lake. There were fun-filled events that brought people and music and festivities to the grounds. As a neighbourhood, we accepted and lived with the excitement. Yes, on occasion, there have been incidents but not on a regular basis. Also, by midnight events closed and people went home.

Since Muzik moved in, the grounds have changed. Muzik was presented to us by David Miller's councillors, as a transparent venue. We would still be able to appreciate the Horticultural Building and the statues of the Greek Gods. We would have the park and clear access to Lake Ontario. Slowly, over the years, Muzik took over the corner. As neighbours we were stunned. How did this happen? Who gave permission for the fences, the pools and the rowdy guests.

In our petitions, we list the issues that we have with Muzik's operation. In summary they are:

1. preventing Torontonians from enjoying the "Garden of the Greek Gods".
2. creating a dangerous environment, with drunken and/or drug using patrons roaming around the EX grounds and violating nearby neighbourhoods.
3. presenting unacceptable risks of criminal activity which include assaults and murders some of which are currently being investigated by the Toronto Police Services.
4. risking the safety of Torontonians living near and/or visiting Exhibition Place.

In our petition we have requested:

1. the cancellation of Muzik's lease,
2. restoring the use of the Horticultural Building as a site for family activities,
3. revoking the liquor license for Muzik Clubs Inc.,
4. restoring calm for the neighbourhoods bordering the grounds where Muzik is located,
5. preventing the approval of a facility that can risk violence and death to those frequenting Exhibition Place, and
6. restoring the beautiful architecture and landscape of the grounds.

The western part of the CNE was considered a family area. There is the playground, the outdoor basketball courts, the outdoor children's water pool and Medieval Times. Liberty Grand hosts many weddings and private events that seem to be well controlled. The Raptors practice facility offers youth who are interested in learning and practicing the sport a great venue.

How does Muzik fit in to the family based, community model of these venues?

We recommend the closure of Muzik, the restoration of the Horticultural Building, community access to the statues of the Greek Gods and the ability to appreciate the beautiful park.

Please do not forget the safety of our neighbourhood and, the possible consequences that venues may have on our community when you are discussing future events at Exhibition Place.

Thanks you for your time.