

FCA President's Report 2015-2016: Gary Sealey

Over the past two years, thanks to Director John Chenier, FCA carried out surveys on the profile and interests of community association members. Very revealing! This year, John followed up by asking Members point-blank where FCA could improve.

These surveys gave direction and feedback on the FCA first-ever business plan. We wanted to get on the same wave-length as the City, whether or not we agreed, so we also used the Dot-ology Bob Brocklebank prepared at September's General Meeting, pronouncing Member priorities on City strategic goals/issues.

Going to the far horizon we have been looking forward, to a city of '*complete communities*'. To that end FCA worked to:

- Get known by City and other politicians
- Advise on City strategies, plans, standards, budgets
- Help connect City Hall to communities and vice versa
- Initiate new Regional Voices grouping communities
- Partner in delivery of civic programmes
- Build capacity among FCA Members and groups

FCA is on 'first-names' at City Hall where FCA Board and representatives collaborated on many meetings [on Planning/Zoning; Infill and Coach Houses; City Budget; Celebrations of 2017; Heritage; Taxi Licensing; Rural Water Charges, Police]. Several Councillors attended monthly FCA meetings too. We have reached to Queen's Park and local MPP's, too and to major not-for-profits. Many associations do communications very well, but City-wide communications and cross-promotion of associations could improve. Ever-better ways are desired to engage and represent the mass Ottawa public who are the essence of our communities.

Regional Voices

September's General Meeting put forward to Members Ward Council concepts by Director Agnes Warda with Councillor Keith Egli, along with other approaches. In **Ottawa far West**, among groups based in rural and former villages and towns two FCA Directors Beltzner and Sweetnam successfully worked with Ward Council President, FCA Director Agnes Warda on Rural Water and other issues.

Downtown groups worked very effectively on "Complete Streets" and put forward a compelling and publicly supported strategy. An **ad hoc alliance of**

central groups concerned with needs of Refugees, especially Syrians, formed an action-plan to press for rapid provision of supports. Several coalesced to bring valuable expertise to the City **Forestry Strategy**.

In the year-end Members Survey organized by Director John Chenier respondents said to improve the organization of and raise the profile of these FCA Regional Voices, especially Eastern Voices; to do what Members want requires more eastern Members and also more for the Regional Voices Committee.

Through General Meetings FCA started a constructive dialogue with City Senior Management and several councillors, on:

City's **Budget** (we urged and the City agreed, to produce a Budget Primer); **Affordable Housing** strategies; **Crime Statistics** (the Police agreed to collect long-term community data); the overall **City Strategy and Business Plan**; deficits in local **Community Centres, Parks and Recreation**; **Forestry** especially impacts of intensification, and renewed standards for Forest Canopy Protection; **Natural areas** systems planning;

Planning and Growth Management strategies; and **Municipal Campaign Financing**. FCA was one of the few key associations advocating at **Queen's Park Standing Committee** for change to municipal campaign financing. The government accepted our FCA position of 2015. Thanks for personal tour there by Director Alex Cullen and by our Provincial Government MPP's in Ottawa supporting us!

Participation in FCA Monthly Meetings has almost doubled, year-over-year. Members said the New Year's Speed Dating and pot-luck Levy was fun and informative. The Members Survey reported these General Meetings are valued; and Members want them to stick to salient topics to leave time for reflection and networking. The outgoing Board notes to the new Board a suggestion to reduce the frequency of routine Business Meetings and then off-loading business to Board Committees or Special Meetings to save time for topics of prime interest and networking. More, hosting Members are also needed to complete the City-wide rotation of meetings. All FCA Committees need people – what a good way to get involved!

Committee Highlights:

Planning Liaison headed by VP Sheila Perry engaged many City planners with about 100 community association planning representatives on subjects of concern

like Infill, Coach Houses, OMB Appeal. Sheila organized a "Imagine Ottawa" forum as well as contributed to the City's Planning Summit.

Efficiency group headed by Treasurer Lorne Cutler and Director Maria Luisa Marti used a generous, anonymous donation to obtain Directors' Insurance; recruited a Board Trainee through "Diver-City on Board"; corrected a long-standing obstacle in the Corporate File.

Governance Committee members had a series of meetings with City staff regarding implementation of the City's Public Engagement Strategy and means of improving the flow of information to and from community associations.

Transportation Committee prepared and followed up a request to the City to reduce congestion caused by City-approved construction projects.

Watching **Affordable Housing**, Alex Cullen.

Thanks for active Committees headed as follows, Communications, **John Chenier**; Efficiency, **Maria Luisa Marti and Lorne Cutler**; Governance, **Bob Brocklebank**, Nominations **Graeme Roderick**; Awards, **Graeme Roderick**; Planning/Zoning Liaison, **Sheila Perry**; Regional Voices, **Klaus Beltzner, Phil Sweetnam**; Transportation **Alex Cullen, Klaus Beltzner**. **Thanks Executive:** VP, Sheila Perry (Liaison Planning/Zoning); Treasurer, Lorne Cutler; the Secretary [Team], Maureen Forsythe, Kul Kapoor. **Thanks due to Directors** at Large: Klaus Beltzner, Robert Brocklebank, Alex Cullen, Maria Luisa Marti, Don Stewart, Phil Sweetnam, Agnes Warda.