



## **President's Report To the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Membership of the FCA June 19, 2024**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Federation of Citizens' Associations (FCA) held its Annual General Meeting on June 21, 2023, in a virtual format. During the meeting, a keynote address from Ottawa Centre MP Yasir Naqui on the topic of reimagine Ottawa was conducted, and the election for the 2022-23 Board of Directors took place. At that time, the FCA had a membership of 64 organizations.

### **FCA MONTHLY MEETINGS:**

From September 2023 to May 2024, the FCA has successfully conducted 9 monthly meetings, consistently drawing an average attendance of 60 participants. These gatherings covered a range of significant subjects, including the City's Budget Directions, Lansdowne 2.0 Redevelopment, Bronson Centre, CPIP Insurance for Community Associations, Emergency Preparedness and the City of Ottawa Public Engagement Strategy.

Furthermore, during the FCA's monthly meetings, a special segment called "Spotlight" provided an opportunity for various community associations to present themselves and share information about their initiatives. Each association was allotted five minutes to describe their organization and its activities. The following community associations had the opportunity to participate and deliver presentations: Lowertown CA, Cumberland CA, Action Sandy Hill and Carlington.

### **FCA COMMITTEES:**

**The FCA's Planning & Zoning Committee**, led by chair Robert Brinker, is the busiest and largest FCA Committee, with 100 members and between 30 and 40 in attendance at meetings.

The primary emphasis for this year centered around commencing the consultation process for the new comprehensive zoning by-law, as well as examining the repercussions of provincial planning bills 23, 109, 185 and others. Neighborhood zoning, urban design guidelines, and consultation were also discussed. The committee formed a 'Neighbourhood Zoning Working Group', to start facilitating more detailed and pointed discussions.

Several stakeholder meetings were held, with representatives from the FCA, GOHBA (Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association), and City staff, to prepare for the release of the new Comprehensive Zoning by-law. The FCA Spoke at committee to the Lansdowne 2.0 file and to the staff report for the new comprehensive zoning by-law.

**The FCA's Transportation Committee**, led by co-chairs John Verbaas and Alex Cullen, had 38 members. The committee continues to meet most months with 8-15 participants, to discuss/review major items coming up at City Transportation and Transit Committee meetings

One meeting included a presentation from OC Transpo focused on their reporting of performance metrics. A committee priority is to push OC Transpo to provide more data on how the system is being used and how it is performing.

A future similar presentation from City roads and cycling staff is planned at which the committee would advocate effort for better reporting on congestion trends on our roads. A further interest is scrutiny of money collected from speed cameras and how it is spent on achieving improved road safety.

A major focus looking ahead will be providing input to the TMP (Transportation Master Plan) which for the next year will be entering its most important phase. The City will publish its projections of how travel movements in the city will change over the next 25 years and will propose a list of several billions of dollars of capital investments in roads, transit, cycling and walking.

Development charges continue to be of interest in as 70% of the funds collected via DC's are spent on transportation projects. The committee takes an interest in how DC's are calculated and how they are spent.

The committee will follow the tabling of a new winter maintenance policy for roads, cycling, and walking.

**The FCA's External Relations Committee**, led by co-chairs by Lynne Davison-Fournier and Elizabeth McAllister, has sought to bring influence to City approaches to public consultation and management. The committee produced draft guidelines for Community Associations participating (under NDA - non-disclosure agreements) in pre-consultation meetings which at the time were required of developers, and a series of Questions, Concerns and Suggestions, developed with the collaboration of FCA Members and submitted to City staff. Meetings were held with 3 Councillors (Brown, King, Johnson) to discuss the gaps in City's public consultations in comparison with the Gunning Principles, and to ask for advice in approaching staff. A motion from Councillor Johnson's motion was used as talking points.

The committee met with the director of the Public Information and Media Relations Department in charge of the review of the City's Public Engagement Strategy.

During March and April general monthly meetings of FCA, the wider membership received presentations from the City departments mentioned.

The committee has observed that contact with Councillors interviewed support giving citizens more voice in planning and other policies. However, the provincial government seems to be moving in the opposite direction, particularly in development and housing aspects which constitute the bulk of city consultation initiatives. There is some support among City staff for improved consultation but this may need a culture change led by the most senior levels of the municipality.

**The FCA's Communication Committee**, led by LeeAnne Van der Burgt, had two primary objectives this past year. The first was to recruit, hire and train a new Administrative Assistant for FCA. The second objective for the Communications Committee was forensics on the current communications model. An update to our website was successful including the posting of our members organisations, a long-anticipated feature for our members and partners.

**The FCA's Membership Committee**, led by Warren Waters, worked on strategies to expand and retain our membership base and consolidate the multiple databases of various contacts into a usable format.

**The FCA's Insurance Working Group** had success in lobbying at city hall to stop the approach from legal staff to transform the former CPIP (Community Partners Insurance Program) into a different format. Instead Council gave the direction to extend the program to a wider range of Community associations starting in 2025. A big thank you to our Past President Alex Cullen for leading this important file for us.

#### **FCA BOARD:**

The FCA's Board met on 12 occasions, handling a wide range of responsibilities beyond the coordination of monthly membership meetings. They actively supported the efforts of the FCA's Planning & Zoning Committee and Transportation Committee, while also overseeing the management of the organization's website, newsletter, Twitter account, and budget. Recognizing the expansion of the FCA, the Board followed up with the decision to hire an administrative assistant, thus ensuring efficient handling of administrative duties going forward.

Additionally, the Board of the FCA proactively engaged in advocacy efforts on behalf of the organization. They composed letters addressed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing, expressing the FCA's position on various bills and on the minor corridor motion from City Council.

Other challenges facing the FCA and its members in the coming year include the comprehensive zoning bylaw, based on the new Official Plan, the next steps on the new Transportation Master Plan, as well as conforming to the provisions of the new Ontario Non-profit Corporations Act.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The FCA operates as an association comprised of voluntary associations, drawing strength from the dedicated contributions of our 60 members. The organization's financial status, primarily supported by membership fees and a few generous individual contributions, will be presented by our treasurer, Lorne Cutler. However, the FCA faces escalating demands, not only from our members seeking assistance across a broad range of activities but also from the City of Ottawa, which relies on community input for program and policy development.

Keeping up with city policies and reports, coordinating meetings, ensuring timely community responses to emerging issues, and distributing newsletters have made the FCA Board acutely aware of its limited resources.

Consequently, the Board remains committed to exploring funding opportunities to enhance both its own capacity and that of its member organizations.

*Respectfully submitted by Robert Brinker, President 2023-24*