Background information on NCC proposal for bistro at Patterson Creek

Current situation:

- The National Capital Commission (NCC) is holding a consultation regarding a pilot project to have a 40-seat bistro near the Patterson Creek pavilion. This proposal is significantly different than the first one made in 2019.
- The upcoming consultation will be the first one on this new proposal.

Background:

- In 2019, the NCC proposed three bistros as a pilot project: at Confederation Park, at Remic Rapids, and at Patterson Creek. (The other bistros operated in 2019 and 2020.)
- At that time, the Patterson Creek bistro was to have consisted of a 240 m^2 patio, two refurbished shipping containers, and portable toilets.

May 2019

- The GCA received an email from the NCC on May 29 (after the GCA's May board meeting), informing us of the project. The GCA asked who in the community was consulted regarding strategies to minimize any impact, how the GCA might work with the NCC to engage with those most likely to be affected, and how project success would be measured. The NCC's response included information about the three sites being animated, hours of operation, mitigation measures around waste, and noted that the NCC would evaluate success of the bistro. There was no description of community engagement approaches.

June 2019

- Neighbours noticed a liquor licence application posted on the railing along the water.
- Construction equipment appeared in the park on June 17, but work was suspended given nearby residents' concerns. These residents subsequently circulated a petition that garnered 200 signatures of those opposed to the pilot project.
- In response, the NCC quickly organized an open house on June 24 to discuss the project with the community. The open house was attended by hundreds of people, the majority of whom expressed concerns about the project.

July 2019

- On July 4, Sarah Viehbeck, GCA president, wrote to the NCC CEO, Tobi Nussbaum, to raise the GCA's concerns about the lack of consultation. She requested documentation about the project and that the GCA be involved in the project's evaluation.
- Throughout July and August, concerned neighbours sent multiple inquiries and requests for information. Not being satisfied with the response, they made a complaint to the NCC's Ombudsman about the lack of a proper consultation process.

August 2019 to March 2020

- The NCC Ombudsman initiated an investigation into the project in August 2019 and issued a report in March 2020. (Here is an Ottawa Citizen article about the report.)
- The Ombudsman determined that the NCC had not conformed with the spirit or the letter of its Public Engagement Policy, that it needed to "reset" consultations, and that consultations should be undertaken "at a flexible stage whereby the final decision takes public concerns and interests into account."
- In September, the NCC wrote to the GCA for input on the evaluation criteria for the project. The GCA discussed this at its October board meeting, and sent a response

suggesting that “Community Impact” be a criterion. The NCC presented its evaluation criteria to its Board which did not include that suggested criterion.

April 2020

- At its April meeting, the GCA passed a motion asking the NCC not to proceed with the bistro during the summer of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

November 2020 to present

- In November, neighbours appeared before the Ontario Licence Appeal Tribunal to object to the issuance of a liquor licence.
- In January 2021, a settlement was reached: the NCC agreed not to install shipping containers and portable toilets in the park, and made other adjustments related to the size, location, hours, noise, lighting, and cooking on the premises.