

President's Message

Mr. Courtney Fisher

On the occasion of Rosewood Taxpayers' Association's 25th Anniversary

April 17, 2014

From Strength to Strength

...Madam Chair, honoured guests, friends and neighbours...

I am always happy to be here, but tonight more so than ever

...Tonight we...celebrate our past while casting hopeful eyes to the future

Ten years ago when Sandra and I considered becoming residents of Rosewood, aware that urban parks can be home to controversial activities, we hatched a reconnaissance plan

A plan that involved visiting *Alexmuir Park* at 2:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning...

However, on the morning of our visit and in the darkness of the night, it became clear to us that except for a few confused squirrels who fancied themselves...nocturnal, the park was at peace with itself, its occupants were at peace with the laws of the land and all were at peace with the neighbours surrounding them.

And so

To all the great people in this room--the card-carrying members of *Rosewood Taxpayers' Association*, the supporters, the politicians, the pioneers, the volunteers, the problem-solvers and the visionaries, to all of you who have worked so hard and for so long to bring our community to where it is today--on behalf of the families of the almost 1600 homes that comprise this community I say thanks and happy anniversary; happy 25th anniversary

You, the residents of Rosewood, have demonstrated success where others have failed.

You stood firm where some have faltered

You overcame obstacles that claimed the hopes and aspirations of many

And you confronted the inevitable challenges that come with both time and change and consequently you have brought us to where we are today—a community that's partially defined by an effective association that promotes cleanliness, safety, property standards and above all a caring and progressive attitude

And to all of you, to each and every one of you in this room, from the youngest to the best, thank you are Rosewood's true champions.

Further, I want to welcome the newer attendees tonight.

If this is the first, second, third, fourth time you are coming out to a general meeting I...thank you for coming out

And I...encourage you to get involved.

I...encourage you to attach your name, your skills and a sliver of your time to one or more of the many things we do

Because, there is one thing that I want you to know and that is that as a community, momentum is on our side, the wind is at our backs and we are unrepentantly moving from strength to strength.

Over the past 2½ decades, our community has come a long way.

And that long journey has seen us grow from strength to strength.

We have journeyed

From a community of just a few homes

To a community of just under 1600 homes

We have journeyed

From a pioneering and somewhat unilingual community

To a rich and vibrant multi-lingual and multi-ethnic community,

We have journeyed

From the pioneering work done by early visionaries

To celebrating those visionaries and the values they clung to in the form of awards named in their honour

And tonight we celebrate current champions as we honour our dedicated canvassers

From the early installation of stop signs

To the recent installation of 4 stop signs at P-loops and other intersections.

We are journeying from strength to strength

From strength to strength we transitioned

From a unilingual two-page educational newsletter

To a fully bi-lingual newsletter that serves all our residents

From the informative guest speakers of yesterday we transitioned to the dynamic and informative guest speakers of today

And from the earlier financial supports for our schools we pivoted to more robust supports in the form of increased contributions and the sponsorship of graduation awards

Whether it's the earlier financial support for Rosewood Soccer
To our more recent sponsorship of *The Rosewood Soccer Leadership Award* or

Whether it's the epic David-and-Goliath battles of the past
To the more recent David-and-Goliath battles over cell phone towers and now oil pipelines or

Whether it's the near 14 volunteers who worked the *Scarborough Rosewood Food Drive* in its
inaugural year
To the over 35 volunteers and multiple donors who supported the effort in year two

From that to this
From those to these
From there to here

As a community, as an association, we are unapologetically moving from strength to strength

But here is another thing.

I was raised on a generous diet of gems of wisdom and bowls of porridge.
The gems of wisdom went down well.

And tonight one particular gem comes to mind
It was instructive to me then and is relevant to us today
“Good better best
Never let it rest
Until your good becomes better and your better becomes best”

That we are moving from strength to strength is undeniable
But as we cast our eyes to the future, we can make our good better, and we can make our better
best

We can...

- Encourage others to get involved (speak to friends, neighbours, speak to former members who may have drifted away, encourage them to return and encourage them to get involved)
- Participate in the annual community cleanups (April and September)
- Help distribute flyers and newsletters
- Join *Project 1000* and canvass for new members
- Assist with the mushrooming *Scarborough Rosewood Food Drive* (drop off empty boxes, deliver flyers, assist at the sorting plant, go door to door to collect food items, help make deliveries, volunteer as a shuttle driver)

We can...

- Take on administrative responsibilities for an existing project (*Lawn and Garden Award, Community Clean-up*)
- Take on a new project (some ideas include: Rosewood Community Walk, Family Fun Day, Canada Day Celebrations)
- Represent the community on the Board of *Friends of Alexmuir Park*
- Share our ideas (e.g. community garage sale) and our role in executing the idea with the RTA executive,
- Share our concerns (e.g. the trees to be cut) and accompanying solutions and our role in carrying out the solution
- Get involved and express our concerns BEFORE decisions are made (e.g. hospital mergers, transit planning,).

But here is the final thing...

This room is full of true believers, pioneers and leaders

Your presence tonight speaks to your commitment to your community

But I'll say it anyway

I'll say it because I want you to share this message with others

As we bring down the curtain on our first 25 years

Let's stage a new performance

One that's defined by us

Pulling together.

Working together.

Getting involved.

Getting others involved.

Building networks.

And forging alliances

Let's stage a new performance that's further defined by at least 1000 active RTA members

With active and engaged members,

Our participation will give us more leverage.

Our actions will produce real change.

Our involvement will bring effective influence and

We will come to influence the things that influence us.

And before I go

Let Act 1, Scene 1 of this new performance commence this coming Saturday when we gather for one of our community's most definitive events,

An event that was born in this community

And later gave birth to similar events across the city

I am referring to our annual community cleanup.

This Saturday, April 19 at 9:45 a.m. I want you join others and me in the parking lot of the very school in which I stand.

To everyone in this room, happy anniversary and
Thanks for your time,
Thanks for your love,
Thanks for your patience and above all
Thanks for your constant and unflinching support over the past three years.

May we all, from the youngest to the best, see another 25 years

Thank you