

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2024 – Catherine Boucher

DCA volunteers work hard all year and do their best to improve the quality of life for residents of Dalhousie.

Some battles are big and hard and we too often lose, as we are the David to the Goliath of entrenched bureaucracies and governments with deeper pockets.

However, this year we did have what would be called a Big Win. Saving Plouffe Park was our focus for much of last summer and fall. We worked with many others on a coalition of organizations from our friends to the west in Hintoburg, our PPRA allies and SWCHC. It took hours of meetings and writing letters and getting media attention, but in the end, Plouffe Park is here to stay. There are too many people for me to thank, but I have to give special shout out to Imran Kaderdina, who wrangled us through and kept us on message.

But my predecessor, Mike Powell, who held this position for nine years, once said at an AGM that we need to keep track of the smaller “wins”.

This struck me at the time and still does.

So, my report will highlight some of these smaller wins over the past year.

It is in no particular order, but a sampling of what DCA volunteers have accomplished.

- We helped to host a fabulous Halloween party in Plouffe Park with our neighbours from Devonshire School and PPRA. Special thanks to Jane Harley.

DCA was planning one and Jane posted hers on FB first, so we joined forces.

- On Thursday this week, a replacement commemorative tree was planted in Plouffe Park. To honor a friend and activist, Maija Kagis. And the tree person from the City came and met with volunteers on site!
- We are keeping fingers crossed that Just Foods will pick us for funding for a renewed Sweet Willow Community Garden at 31 Rochester Street. Partners include CCOC for the use of the space and water, Rewild Landscapes Jeff Collins, who helped with site plan, Box of Life's Akil and his worm composter benches, and Christina from Ability First Ottawa. Still trying to get hold of Laidlaw housing coop to

tap into their downspouts. Special kudos to Nancy Campbell and Debbie Barton on this one. Hugglekultur is the new mantra.

- This past week, City staff did a traffic count at the corner of Preston and Albert, where it's not safe for kids to cross. Thanks to all the mama lions in Walnut Court for keeping the pressure on.
- Reclaimed some front yard greenspace at 3 heritage buildings on Queen St that had been carved out for parking. Won our case at Committee of Adjustment. Bravo Debbie Barton.
- Expecting another win at CofA for our objection to amplified music on a rooftop patio on Preston Street.
Residents and Councillor Troster, were also objecting.
- Cleaned 4 of our parks as part of Clean the Capital.
Primrose, Piazza Dante, Chaudiere and McCann.
- The Public Realm committee folks got Councillor Troster and her staff out on their bikes last fall for a tour highlighting the need for more greenspace and trees, depaving, reclaiming right of way. Ended up with beers at Pub Italia, so not everything is work work work.
- Still working on Booth Street traffic. Thermoplastic notices telling trucks to stay away installed last month at Albert and Somerset.

Fingers crossed truckers can decipher a big red slash over the picture of a truck.

- Working on a Good Neighbour Agreement with SWCHC and the Chinatown BIA. Special thanks to Ryan on this one.
- Thanks to the folks at CAFES (Community Associations for Environment Sustainability) and MP Yasir Naqvi, we helped distribute over 50 trees for Mother's Day.
- A couple of dedicated guerrilla gardeners have been working on beautifying the DCA garden Preston sidewalk, using pollinator plants donated by many.

And spent hops donated by Spark Beer for mulch.

Thanks Geri.

As you can see, we work in many ways large and small and we rely on many partners and neighbours to help.

That is the best of community work.