The Ruskin Agreement

There is a long-term agreement relating to the Ruskin parking lot that was endorsed by the City as well as the hospital and neighbourhood.

Historical background:

1990s  –  There was disagreement as to what to do with the Ruskin lot. Then City Councillor Joan Wong took on the issue by asking various individuals and organization to develop an agreement.  A group comprised of senior hospital management, senior city staff, members of the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association and others produced a unanimous plan to divide the Ruskin lot equally into a 120 space parking lot bordering on Ruskin Street, Reid and Macfarlane. The northern half of the lot was to be landscaped to form a small park. Unfortunately, this unanimous agreement was subsequently voided by the Civic Hospital’s Board of Trustees.

May 28, 1996 – The City passed a resolution to maintain the surface parking lot on Ruskin and do no more for at least 30 years. At the time, a Civic Hospital trustee told the City’s Planning and Environment Committee “that although the issue had once been controversial, it was no longer. The turnaround resulted from discussion with the community association, where it was learned the primary concern was the parking lot would eventually be developed by the hospital for future expansion. The hospital however, has made it clear it has no such plan, and an agreement was reached which preserves the parking lot to service the Heart Institute’s patients.” When a City Councillor asked about the community’s desire for a park on the Ruskin lot, he was told that “if the community could not have a park, they would rather have a parking lot that would not expand, rather than a building.”

The Committee then considered and passed the following text:

“To ensure that the use of the City-owned lands on the north side of the Civic Hospital (bounded by Ruskin, Reid, Hutchison and MacFarlane) which was originally taken over by the City of Ottawa as open space, is limited to a surface parking lot of not more than 270 parking stalls and the adjoining green space, all in existence as of 1995. The lot is primarily for the use of Civic Hospital patients and visitors. The period of the usage is for not less than 30 years, beginning in 1995. The Hospital will continue to monitor its parking operations and will assess all other options for the supply of parking facilities appropriate to the demands which it faces during this time period. Subsequent to this time period, the use of these lands as a park will be re-evaluated. Area residents, the local community association, the City and the Civic Hospital are to be included as participants in the re-evaluation.

This agreement doesn’t expire until sometime after 2025.

*Sources: Message from Tony Bambrough, Founding Co-President of the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association, April 2011;* [*http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning\_And\_Environment/28May96/DEFERR18.PDF*](http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning_And_Environment/28May96/DEFERR18.PDF)*;* [*http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning\_And\_Environment/28May96/PEA28MAY.HTML*](http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning_And_Environment/28May96/PEA28MAY.HTML)*;* [*http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning\_And\_Environment/28May96/PEM28MAY.PDF*](http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/archives/rmoc/Planning_And_Environment/28May96/PEM28MAY.PDF)