

MINUTES OF YQNA MEETING #96 Tuesday September 12, 2023

On-line Via ZOOM with approximately 70 participants

Hosted by Neal Colgrass, Chief Technical Officer

Chaired by Angelo Bertolas, Chair

1. Angelo Bertolas

Angelo welcomed participants to the YQNA's regular bi-monthly meeting.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Wendat, the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. We pay tribute to their legacy and the legacy of all First Peoples of Canada. Today the traditional meeting place of Toronto is still home to many Indigenous People from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work in the communities that have grown in the treaty lands.

3. Municipal Update — Tom Davidson

- **Ontario Place** — The province has [submitted a revised plan](#) to redevelop Ontario Place based on community concerns [raised back in April](#). City Staff also [criticized the proposal](#). Issues include the scope and scale of buildings, size of a big new parking garage, and public space lost to a spa and water park built by the Austrian company Therme. Another round of public comments ended Sept. 23.
- **Sewage beach** — Davidson confirmed [a report](#) that the province plans to replace a popular pebble beach on the south side of Ontario Place with a new beach on the west side of West Island, where untreated sewage flows out.
- **Contracts** — Agreements for the project remain mostly under wraps, but appear set for about 95 years — "literally generations," said Davidson. Councillor Ausma Malik and her colleagues are refusing to give up City land for the project until a decision has been made by City Council. But the province could move to expropriate the City's 16 acres.
- **New mayor** — After Mayor Olivia Chow's election victory, Councillor Malik helped chair the striking committee that appoints councillors to City Hall positions. Malik was also named one of Toronto's four Deputy Mayors.
- **Other roles** — Malik was appointed to the City's Economic and Development Committee and became chair of Exhibition Place. She retains her position on Waterfront Toronto's board.
- **Fiscal Toronto** — Malik assumed her new roles amid intensive meetings about Toronto's "serious fiscal challenges," per Davidson. Toronto's deficit shortfalls will not affect local projects like Reese Park, which are funded through parks reserve funds.
- **Other projects** — Construction continues at Bathurst Quay Commons Park, set for completion in 2024; the Silos are being prepped for future arts and cultural use; and Spadina Pier (a parking garage next to Portland Slip that was targeted for closure due to water infiltration) is slated to become extra park and program space connected to Bathurst Common.

- **Charter City** — Bertolas asked if Toronto is seeking Charter City status to give it greater independence in seeking revenue. Davidson said the City Council has asked staff to consider the move, which would require federal and provincial support.
- **Party boat noise on the rise** — The Waterfront BIA is helping the City collaborate with a tour boat association to mitigate noise from the harbour. In the past, cooperation with boat operators has yielded greater results than anti-noise enforcement.

4. Federal Update – Daiana Ferrari

- **Honeymoon** – MP Kevin Vuong is on his honeymoon and couldn't attend tonight's meeting.
- **Refugee crisis** – Vuong's team focused this summer on the refugee crisis, which unfolded near their office at the shelter intake office on Peter St. "We got on the ground right away," said Ferrari. "The bulk of our summer was working with that and working with organizations in providing support for folks. We're still very much involved."
- **Island Airport** – Bertolas wondered if it was premature for the federal government to provide about \$30 million for a US Customs clearance function at Billy Bishop Airport, before the airport's lease has been extended. Ferrari said she would get back to YQNA on that.
- **Budget deficit** – Bertolas suggested that Ottawa "needs to step it up" in helping with the immigration issue and Toronto's budget deficit. Ferrari agreed, saying Vuong is "one of the few MPs" that "actually got up and made that same point. He said we're going to have a sticky situation with all the cuts and lack of funding."
- **Charter City** – Asked about Toronto gaining Charter City status, Ferrari called this "one of the priorities" for discussion at Vuong's office.

5. Provincial Update – Chris Glover

- **Greenbelt** – Glover emphasized the need to reverse Premier Ford's Greenbelt development plan (which [Ford himself did](#) nine days later amid a scandal). Glover noted the importance of protecting Greenbelt farmland and redirecting development to land that is already serviced.
- **Ontario Place plan** – Environmental assessment of Ford's plan did not include the West Island, where Therme wants to cut down 850 trees and "literally destroy, obliterate every living plant and animal. It's absolutely shameful. We're going to be pushing for that environmental assessment." He praised an Ontario Place for All [video on the plan](#).
- **Ontario Line** – Continues to meet with Metrolinx and businesses/residents near the Queen St. business hub. "We want advanced notice of change of noise, of when they're going to be closing streets or sidewalks," said Glover. "And we want positive messaging from Metrolinx about what the closure means."
- **"Keyhole drilling"** – Metrolinx is digging the line with a method called keyhole drilling, which means digging a hole at each station site and tunnelling in between. It's less disruptive than "open cut," which requires rebuilding of the roads.

- **Refugees** — Lack of shelter for refugees this summer “speaks to the need for building more supportive housing,” said Glover, who added that not-for-profit housing can be built along the Ontario Line.
- **Bird-safe windows** — “We’re trying to get the building code changed so that it mandates bird-safe windows on all new construction,” he said. “There’s 25 million birds a year that die from window collisions.”

6. Toronto Police Marine Unit – Constable Stacy Kellough, guest speaker

- **Kellough** has been with Toronto Police Service for 21 years, 15 with the Marine Unit at 259 Queens Quay W. “So I’m in your community all the time, biking to and from work,” she said. “It’s interesting to see what’s going on around the community. And I do have an investment in that as well.” Among the highlights of her presentation:
- **The Marine Unit** has 18 vessels and 35 to 40 officers. It’s responsible for all waterways in Toronto, including the Don River, Humber River, two large reservoirs, Grenadier Pond, several creeks, the Harbour and 1,190 square kilometers of open water on Lake Ontario, extending 13 nautical miles to the Canada/US border. The Marine Unit’s area is larger than the City of Toronto!
- **Responsibilities** include:
 - medical emergencies on the water
 - vessels colliding and/or sinking, including ferry and tour boats
 - medical help and transportation to the mainland for roughly 800 Islanders
 - search and rescue for missing people
 - threatened suicide 911 calls
 - support for other units — like the Marine Unit’s dive team recovering a sunken weapon for Homicide
 - policing large gatherings like concerts at Budweiser Stage
 - winter rescues using an iceboat that runs over ice like an airboat
 - illegal charter boats
- **Tour boat noise** – The Marine Unit responds to 311 noise complaint calls, sometimes with bylaw officers who check the decibel level. Often the boats are within the 85 decibels [allowed by Toronto law](#), but if not, the Marine Unit can persuade boat operators to lower the noise. Noise is not high-priority like emergency calls on the water.
- **Aircraft** – Some Marine Unit vessels have raft systems to rescue Island Airport passengers in the event of a downed plane. They can also support ferry rescues.
- **Trespassing** – Land along the water is owned by entities including the City, Ports Toronto and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. So the Marine Unit handles its share of trespassing calls.
- **Summer is busiest**, with the Marine Unit averaging 500 to 600 911-generated radio calls a month.
- **Water traffic** has become heavier especially since Covid. “We have a lot of rescues,” Kellough said. “We’re having huge issues with Sea-Doos launching and a high number of boats launching at our launch ramps.” Many boaters don’t know or aren’t following the

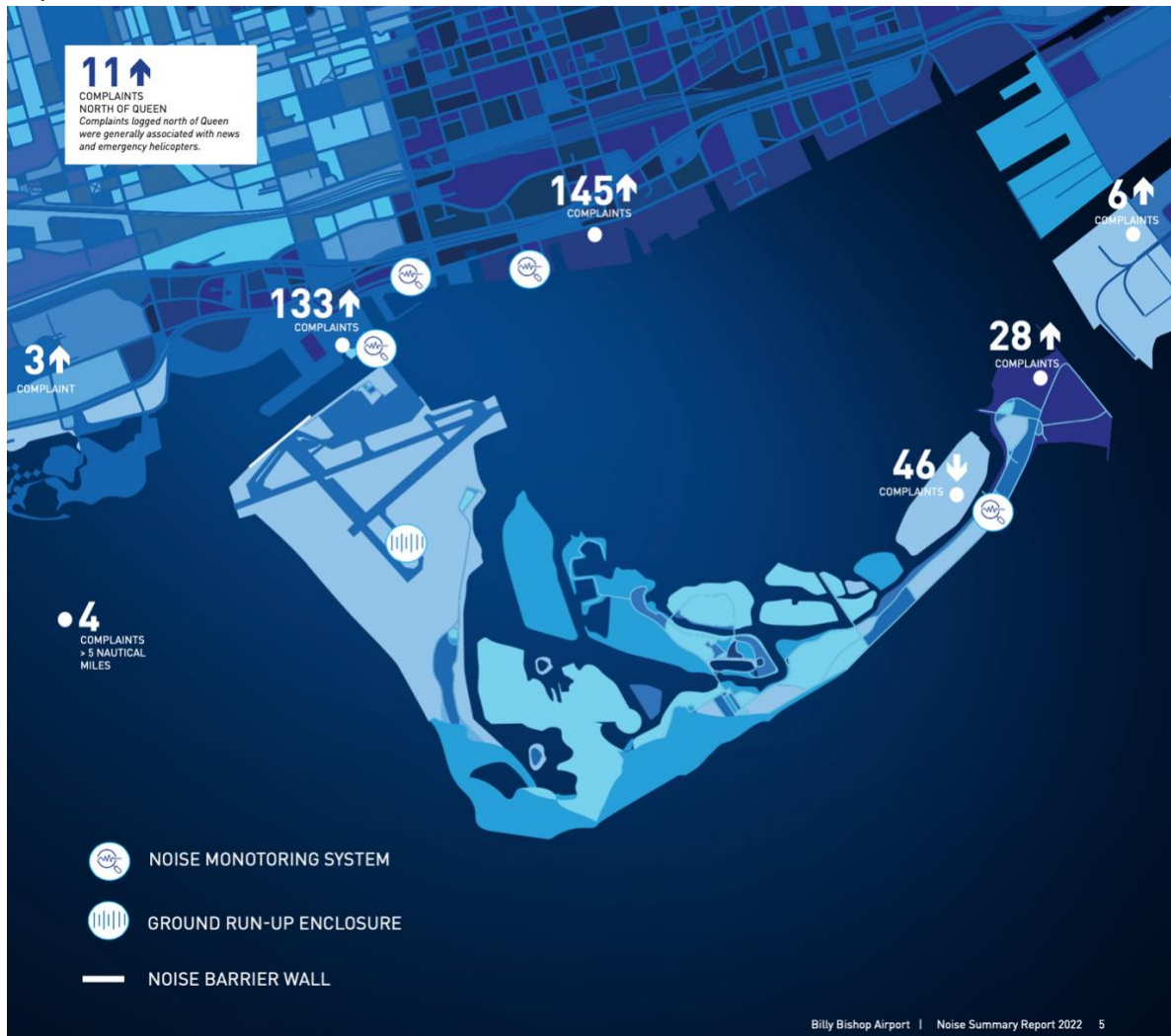
rules. Police are working with Ports Toronto and Transport Canada to tighten up the rules, such as speeding and unsafe operations.

- **Education** – Many boaters launch without the necessary Toronto Harbour license, Bertolas noted. Kellough agreed: “I’m working with Ports Toronto on that. Ports Toronto is working with some of the rental companies.”
- **Ignorance** – Boaters go out on Lake Ontario in small vessels, not realizing they might face 16- to 20-foot waves. “We’ve had boats take on a wave and capsize and we’ve made rescues,” Kellough said. “A lot of people think they’re putting their boat on a cottage-type lake. This is more like an inland ocean. And we’re really trying to promote boat safety.” Life jackets are a must: “Last season 90% of water-related fatalities were not wearing their life jackets.”
- **Coordination with RCMP and US Coast Guards** – “We’re working on cross-border criminality operations,” Kellough said. The Police have several Waterfront resources including a “Great Lakes informant” and “intel sessions.”
- **Quality policing** – “We have a very good fleet in Toronto, probably one of the best in North America,” she added. “We get that from a lot of our friends across the border from the US, and from Vancouver Police. They come to Toronto and they can’t believe the fleet we have.”
- **Marine Unit resources** include an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) for underwater photography and a Sidescan sonar for detecting/imaging objects sunk to the bottom.
- **“Tombstoning”** – that’s when people leave behind belongings before drowning themselves. Passersby often mistake them for lost items. But people should look closely: are there multiple pieces of clothing and/or items not normally discarded, like a cellphone or medication, and possibly a suicide note? Then notify police by calling 911.

7. Island Airport Update – Hal Beck

- **Recent changes at PortsToronto** – RJ Steenstra became CEO last year and named Warren Askew as new vice president. (PortsToronto operates the Island Airport.)
- **Another voice** – Beck has asked for a second YQNA representative to be allowed on the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) with PortsToronto. Beck has attended all but two or three of the 50 CLC meetings since the committee began in 2010.
- **Extra slots** – The airport has offered more “slots” to the airline industry, but it’s unclear whether they exceed the previous limit of 202 or replace slots already abandoned by Porter Airlines. (A slot is an authorization to take off or land at an airport.)
- **Construction** projects big and small are slated to continue at the airport, despite claims in the airport Master Plan that construction was finished.
- **Sewage plants** – Scheduled updates include asphalt improvements, building an east dock wall, and upgrades to sanitary pumping stations. Four such stations will be added this fall, said Beck, “which might imply that they’re expecting three times the volume of sewage there in coming years.”
- **Construction trucks** will be driving through communities to supply the asphalt. Beck will follow up on this because barge transportation was quieter for the community, unlike trucks that “wake people up in the middle of the night with all kinds of granular asphalt.”

- An **Airport bomb threat** on Oct. 22, 2022 displaced many local residents and paralyzed the downtown core for hours, but little was heard from the City or Police during the emergency (which did [not to include a bomb](#)). The City later advised each building to develop its own emergency plan for airport bomb threats. Authorities also promised their own new response plan, but never delivered. “So I’ll have to follow up this fall,” said Beck.
- **Helicopter tours** – [Helitours.ca](#) offers local tours of about 10 minutes each, possibly two at a time throughout the day. PortsToronto staff said that no noise study had preceded approval of these tours. “So the actual magnitude of the flights of helicopters needs to be discussed,” Beck said, noting that there have been “quite a few complaints” about helicopters “flying above our residences and scaring us to bejesus.” Bertolas added that they “fly back right over the Inner Harbour and they fly low, so it exacerbates the noise element.” Beck will press for more information.
- PortsToronto’s [2022 Noise Summary Report](#) for the Island Airport contains no information on noise decibels, only complaint data. The bulk of complaints are in YQNA’s area:

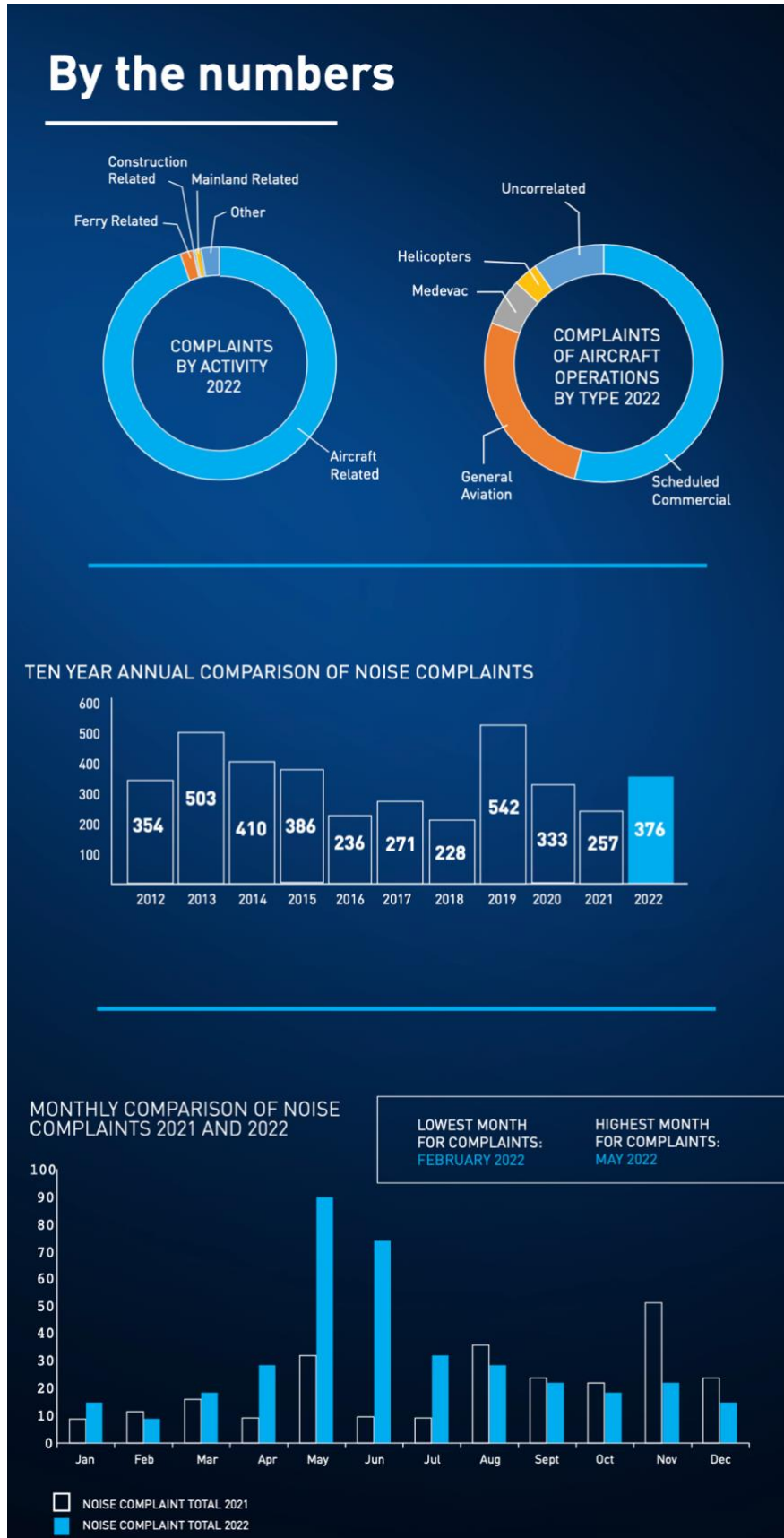


- Complaints “by activity” show that most are about commercial aircraft, followed by general aviation. At Beck’s request PortsToronto included a 10-year annual comparison

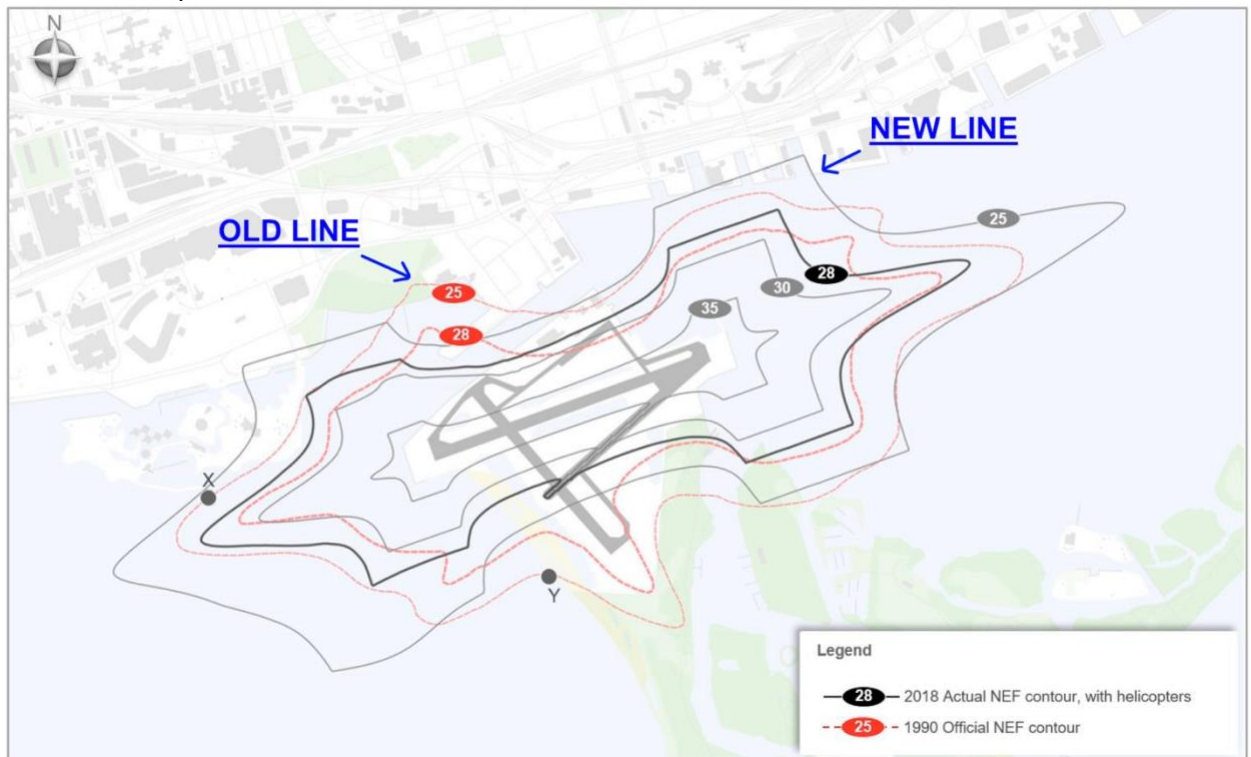
of noise complaints, which shows roughly an equal number of complaints during the Covid years. “So there are things at the airport that are bothering people other than the flights,” Beck said.

- In the 2022 report, PortsToronto finally stopped claiming that flight paths over water reduce noise to residential areas. Beck said he had “complained bitterly about this” because water carries noise 360 degrees around the aircraft “and actually results in more noise. So this is a welcome change to the wording.”

- **Noise monitors** – The Island Airports’s NEF (noise exposure forecast) contours exist to place a limit on acceptable airport noise in the community. Today, some of the meters evaluating such noise are poorly positioned and don’t reflect what most residents are experiencing. Beck will push for better noise monitoring.



- A **Ground Noise Study** was started about four years ago to ensure that the Island Airport meets requirements of the Tripartite Agreement. The final report is due this fall, but the Noise Management Subcommittee of the CLC saw a draft version “and it contained lots of omissions,” Beck said.
- **Flawed NEF data** – Beck has found consistent errors and omissions by hired City and PortsToronto consultants. At one meeting, he said that “none of the five consultants who presented slot capacity information to the public, actually were able to answer very basic questions with respect to the NEF formula.” He presented concerns to Transport Canada, who agreed to a meeting.
- **Another red flag** – In a CLC meeting with PortsToronto and Transport Canada (TC), led by retired TC engineer Gilles Bourgeois, Beck was told that unexplained changes to the airport’s NEF formula were being used “regardless” of why they were made. Beck said that “if Mr. Bourgeois was a professional engineer, licensed and active, and it was his interpretation, he will have publicly admitted that he actually committed professional misconduct. This is not an insignificant statement.”
- **Are we protected?** A [2018 Noise Exposure Contours report](#) by SNC-Lavalin for TC includes an updated NEF contour line (below) that exceeds the original line. The new line also includes perpendicular angles even though “noise will not travel on the water at a 90-degree angle,” said Beck. “I’ll be following up very assertively as to why this was issued to the public.”



- **Disclaimer:** The report also lacks a professional engineering stamp and includes a disclaimer that any use of the report by a third party “is the sole responsibility of such a third party,” even though — in Beck’s words — “it was known that the City is relying on these as Compliance Reports.” Why the City even accepted this report is unclear.

8. Harbourfront Centre – Massimo di Maria

- **Introduction** – Massimo di Maria is Harbourfront Centre’s new Acting Chief Operations Officer. Joining him was Sonia Chai, Chief Branding Officer.
- Harbourfront Centre (HfC) is close to completing **Capital improvements** such as an accessible ramp, gender-inclusive washrooms, a first-aid room, a quiet zone for people in need and accessible lifts. HfC is working towards compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- **The Public square** replacing HfC’s skating rink should be mostly done by October. This includes a greenery, 30 new trees, soil cells to boost tree canopy, and 617 summer misters to cool people off and create evening lighting effects.
- HfC will welcome back the **HMCS Glace Bay**, a Canadian Forces/Royal Canadian Navy coastal defence vessel, at the end of October by HTO Park. Tours will be offered.
- **Ten live-aboard boats** will return to at Marina Four and 28 to Marina Quay West. They provide security and keep the marinas active during winter.
- HfC has spent \$170K to repair docks and build a 64-foot dock. “Our docks have been getting beat up and it's not always from the natural wakes in the water, but more so the wakes made by all the crafts in the water,” he said.
- **Security incidents** are on the rise, including ones involving mental health issues, substance use and aggressive behavior. Security staff has completed Naloxone training, which helps them prevent, recognize and respond to opioid overdoses. HfC security also helped pull an inebriated bystander out of the Harbour this summer and saved his life!
- Security staff has completed **non-violent crisis intervention training**, which YQNA members can also take part in free of charge at HfC with a certified instructor. Bertolas accepted the offer, saying “we’ll probably get a lot of great attendance from YQNA.”

9. YQNA Treasurer – Carolyn Johnson

- YQNA’s current balance “is looking healthy” at \$1,651, Johnson said. A fundraising drive last September helped tremendously, but more is needed to cover the website and Zoom meetings. YQNA’s payment for an all-candidates meeting this summer will also come due.

10. YQNA Chair – Angelo Bertolas

- Bertolas reminds people that YQNA is a volunteer organization and needs more active members, including a new Secretary.

Next YQNA meeting projected for Tuesday, November 7th 2023.