

Group petitions to spare orchard from subway station

BY MICHELLE ERVIN



Locals have mobilized in opposition to one of the proposed locations for the new Allen Road–Eglinton Avenue West subway station, contending that it would result in the loss of six recently planted fruit trees and a number of mature trees.

Susan Poizner is a member of Growing for Green, which maintains the public orchard in Ben Nobleman Park.

“When I did finally see the design, I was horrified,” she said. “It would really destroy the whole atmosphere of the park.”

Poizner subsequently circulated a petition to rally support against the proposed location. Work on the orchard, the first of its kind in the city, began in 2009. Since then, 14 trees — growing apricots, cherries, plums and more — have been planted.

Metrolinx, the provincial agency overseeing the Eglinton-Scarborough light rail transit project, has presented the park location as one of four options to the public.

Coun. Joe Mihevc, however, said it really comes down to the two options on the south side.

“There has been a longstanding desire to have a south side station because it’s a very dangerous intersection for people trying to get to the north side entrance from the south side, so something is absolutely necessary,” he said.

That means the station would either have to encroach into Ben Nobleman Park or onto the parking lot of Toronto Police Service’s 13 Division.

Mihevc is on side with the locals who would like to see the Ben Nobleman Park protected. He would like to see the police station location chosen, ensuring lost parking spaces are replaced and direct access to Eglinton Avenue is maintained. Public consultation on the new station designs is expected to continue into the fall. Ultimately, the final decision will be made by Metrolinx.