

South-end residents want more discussion about green spaces, parks

Gorsebrook Park 'is everybody's backyard,' says Park to Park Community Association

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Pat Whitman, chair of Park to Park Community Association, says they want to support green spaces in Halifax. (Emma Davie/CBC)

A residents' association in Halifax's south end wants to make sure the area — which has seen several high-rise developments in recent years — is also prioritizing parks and green spaces.

On Saturday, about 40 people gathered as a commemorative plaque was unveiled in Gorsebrook Park, which sits among some of the most contentious projects in the south end.

"We see an awful lot of development going on on the peninsula, high rises and adding density, but not an awful lot of discussion about maintaining green spaces," said Pat Whitman, chair of Park to Park Community Association.



Gorsebrook Park is public green space owned by the city of Halifax located off Robie Street between South and Inglis streets. (Emma Davie/CBC)

The association has brought forward concerns and even fought against some of these developments, such as the eight- and 10-storey [residential towers on Wellington Street](#) and [two high-rises near Saint Mary's University on Inglis Street](#).

Whitman said while the group wants to support "appropriate development" in the south end, they also want to make sure places like Gorsebrook Park are protected from future encroachment.

"Halifax is an old city, and we're losing a lot of what was interesting and historical about this city," she said.

Plaque dedicated to Enos Collins

The plaque, affixed to a boulder from the excavation site of a Wellington Street towers, is dedicated to Enos Collins.

Once dubbed the richest man in Canada, Collins was one of the founders of CIBC. He purchased the Gorsebrook property and established his estate there in the 1800s.

In the late 1940s, his family sold what was left of the site to the city of Halifax.



A group of about 40 people gathered at Gorsebrook Park on Saturday to unveil a commemorative plaque for Enos Collins. (Emma Davie/CBC)

"Gorsebrook Park means the world to the residents of HRM," said Labi Kousoulis, MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, on Saturday.

"[It is] the most iconic place to sled in all of Halifax. Growing up here, this is where we all came. So it's great to learn a little bit about the history of the park, who owned the park and how it became to become a park as well."

'This is everybody's backyard'

Coun. Wayne Mason said he also sees the need to recognize parks like Gorsebrook.

"What we've seen in other big cities that have grown, like Toronto and Vancouver and Montreal, is that people will raise families in an apartment building as long as there's a playground and a green space nearby, where they can go and play with their kids," he said.

"This is everybody's backyard. This is the best public space in this neighbourhood for people who are moving in." It also makes the area attractive to developers who want to build the towers east and north of the park, he said.

Whitman said the small tribute to Enos Collins is one step in raising the profile of historic Gorsebrook Park, and demonstrating the importance of green space in the city.

Source: CBC News <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/gorsebrook-park-backyard-community-residents-plaque-enos-collins-1.4430166>