

“Mechanisms through which citizens can have input are all pretty much broken.”
- activist resident **Misha Glouberman**



Kate Eisen, owner of furniture shop INabstracto, says her section of Queen Street West is wild in a way it never was years ago. Nighttime fights in her doorway are now commonplace.

**Beaconsfield Village residents rise up
against the spread of bar culture**

Headaches from high times

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Red street banners flying along Queen Street West show a woman's crossed legs in fishnets and thigh-high leather boots. "It's wild here," they read.

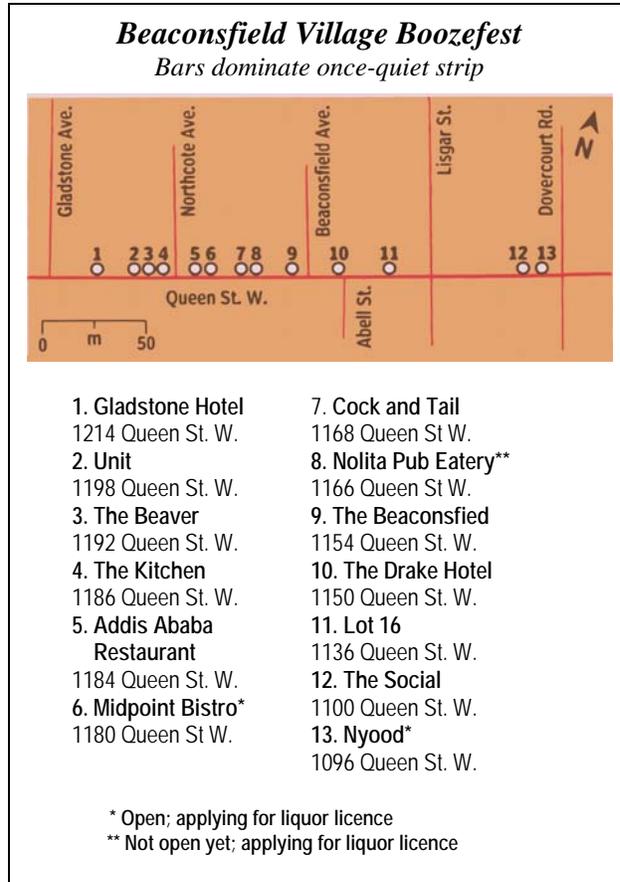
"These banners are a nightmare," said resident and store owner Kate Eisen, who has watched quiet streets of appliance stores and art galleries become subsumed in the strip's new bar culture.

"It was never wild here," she said.

Today, the city's committee of adjustment will consider an application from Nyood, at 1096 Queen St. W., to open a second-storey restaurant and a rooftop patio.

But Nyood is just one example of the bar-opening frenzy that has engulfed Beaconsfield Village since the Drake Hotel's much-hyped launch four years ago, said resident Misha Glouberman, who is leading a local charge to curtail more bar openings. Already, he said, as many as 2,000 people may come to drink on the four blocks between Gladstone Avenue and Dovercourt Road on a weekend night.

"You get guys in suits pissing outside your doorway and screaming," said Mr. Glouberman, who lives on Queen Street, above two bars. "And if [the bars below] have got their windows open and they're playing loud music and they've got 60 people screaming on their patio, the party is at your house."



But bar owners say the new openings have invigorated the local strip economically and addressed some social problems.

"Before we came here, there were prostitutes, there was crack, there were people dying in alleyways," said Richard Lambert, co-owner of the Social.

But Ms. Eisen, who opened her store nine years back, said while there were drug addicts, break-ins and needles in back alleyways a few years back, the area used to be quiet and felt safe.

"There were prostitutes but you knew all of them -- there were like four of them," she said. "Did I ever feel worried? No, never," she said. "I would come home at two in the morning. I never ever looked over my shoulder."

Now, she said, she uses her back door to avoid Queen Street.

"I have someone fighting in the doorway every Saturday night, or someone urinating, and there's broken bottles and glass," she said.

Residents are struggling to find a solution, Mr. Glouberman said.

"In theory, there are all these mechanisms through which citizens can have input," he said.

"But they're all pretty much completely broken."

Establishments applying for liquor licences, he said, post green signs on their windows that direct concerned citizens to bring their concerns to the Alcohol and Gaming

"I have someone fighting in the doorway every Saturday night."

Commission of Ontario. Currently, there are two of these green signs on his block. But writing in, he said, has not yet stopped any local establishments from opening. "As near as we know, [the AGCO] has never denied a licence on the grounds of public interest anywhere in the province," he said.

AGCO spokeswoman Lisa Murray said there have been instances where licences are denied, but that mostly the commission tries to address residents' concerns by imposing restrictions on bars -- for example, limiting live music on patios to certain hours.

Mr. Glouberman and local residents will meet next week to look at petitioning the city to invoke an interim control bylaw to place a moratorium on new bar openings for up to two years.

"I'm a huge proponent of bars," he said, "But you don't want to turn a residential neighbourhood, or a mixed-use neighbourhood, into a bar monoculture."

But Councillor Adam Giambrone (Davenport) said the bylaw is a one-time deal and no long-term solution to flawed legislation.

"Two years from now, you'd be back in the same position and you wouldn't have that weapon," he said. And with construction beginning on 2,000 new condo units in the area, he said, "it seems unlikely that the issue of new bars and restaurants will go away."