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HELEN KENNEDY CAMPAIGN UPDATE – August 24, 2006

Hello friends and neighbours!

With summer quickly coming to a close, I'm looking forward to what's sure to be the fall's biggest event – the election!

I've been canvassing the ward over the summer, hearing about the issues that matter to you, and have actually managed to get some work in the pipeline. Here are some of the things I've been up to:

#### The Island Airport

When will the Toronto Port Authority and its airline partners get the fate they deserve??? – to be shut down, closed, finito, toast for good and for all ... that's what everyone is asking.

I've long been an opponent of the Toronto Port Authority and Porter Air's plans to put in a passenger jet service at the Island Airport this fall, and I was able to focus some attention on this issue in the media in the spring and summer.

Over the summer, I spoke several times to Roger Tassé, who is conducting the federal government review of the Toronto Port Authority's activities. I urged him to hold a public meeting to hear what Toronto citizens think of the plans to fly a full passenger schedule from the Island Airport. You can read the letter [here](#) and see some of the media coverage [here](#). While he declined to hold a public meeting, he held a series of private meetings with resident groups along the lake, and with Community Air.

I believe the federal government, the provincial government and the city should be putting whatever resources are required into a direct link from downtown to Pearson. It's a no-brainer.

Continued, vigorous, steady opposition to the noise, pollution and environmental damage this airport will create is more important than ever. We need a park, not planes.

#### Beating the Heat

We had a couple of weeks of really tough weather this summer. You'll remember those smoggy, stifling days with the humidex readings above 40 degrees.

One weekend, as I watched and waited, Sudbury, Kingston, and other municipalities opened their air conditioned public buildings to the poor. But not Toronto. Until, finally, on the Sunday morning, the City Health Department called a heat emergency and opened a couple of city buildings as cooling centres.

That Sunday afternoon, I was at Metro Hall checking things out and saw an elderly man arrive suffering heat prostration. He had been trapped in his room, too hot, for too long. EMS had to transport him directly to hospital.

I began working with the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee – a group of really dedicated street nurses and concerned citizens. We are lobbying for better protection for citizens who cannot afford air-conditioning. You can read more [here](#). We've drafted legislation that will come before the City Board of Health in September. Here are some details:

- § Since agencies like the Red Cross can't begin to offer assistance until an alert is issued, we need to declare emergencies predictably and earlier.
- § We also need to provide water and nutritious food for the people who come to our shelters.
- § We not only can't afford to delay opening the centres, we need to open centres *where the poor live*. At one point, Metro Hall, the official cooling centre, was empty and Parkdale community centre was filled to the rafters, because people could not afford the car fare to Metro Hall.
- § Ambulance calls were 25% higher than normal, and service for normal emergencies was left short.

We need to stop risking the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. This must be an ongoing priority.

#### The Green Ward

As I canvass our neighbourhoods, you are telling me that you are looking for ways to help Toronto become a greener city. In July, I spoke in City Council Chamber to a joint meeting of the City's Roundtable on the Environment and its Roundtable on a Beautiful City. The standing-room only crowd was a clear indication that people are taking environmental issues very seriously. At the meeting, I proposed that Toronto's new council should make Ward 20 a pilot project for renewable energy. I suggested a number of ways in which the city could assist homeowners to green-up. With help from government, we can make our city a global example of environmentally responsible urban living.

You can read my presentation [here](#) and on [The Bulletin](#).

#### The Right to Vote

I responded quickly to the City Clerk's warning that people whose citizenship could not be confirmed by September 8 would be struck from the electoral rolls. You can read our letter [here](#). In a ward like ours, with a population of new Canadians, it is critical that everyone who should be registered will be registered and able to cast a vote on November 13.

#### Survey Question

Big-box stores like Wal-Mart are a common feature of the suburbs, but many city residents feel bringing such stores into the downtown area will damage the character and charm of some neighbourhoods. That happens to be my view – but my question to you is: Do you think council should prevent large superstores from opening in our Ward? Please [e-mail](#) me with your opinions.

That's all for now, but keep an eye on your inbox. There's a chill in the August night, but in the race for Ward 20, things are just starting to heat up.

Cheers,

Helen Kennedy

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead