



230 FIGHTBACK

### **“A-NOT-TO-BE MISSED OPPORTUNITY” Jon Love at the TMX Market Centre**

We began our campaign against KingSett Capital in the fall of 2022. Fourteen months ago we received an email from KingSett Capital. Their email informed us that they had offered to sell 214-230 Sherbourne back to the city because they now “understands what this property means to the local community”. However, KingSett continues to move forward with their plans to build a condo on the site.

Last week we found out that Jon Love was going to be the keynote speaker at the TMX Market Centre as part of their influencers’ series. The advertisement for the event states that “this is a-not-to-be missed opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of leadership from a legend of the Canadian business world”. Despite not having the \$150 which it cost to attend the event, and despite the fact that the event was sold out, a small group of people from 230 Fightback agreed that this event was indeed “a-not-to-be missed opportunity”. We felt that this was an appropriate moment to let Jon Love know how much 214-230 Sherbourne means to us. So, on the afternoon of February 11 a small group of us crashed the event.

We arrived about 45 minutes before Jon Love was due to speak and as cocktails were being served. Seeing that the front door to the venue was open we walked into the TMX Market Centre. A TMX staff called out and told us that we were not allowed in. We ignored this warning and once in the venue we began to mingle with people and handed out flyers explaining how Jon Love and KingSett Capital were buying up properties in poor neighbourhoods and displacing people from their communities. Before we even had a chance to grab a cocktail we were ushered outside by security who tried to explain to us that this was a private event. We continued our protest just outside by the entrance. The venue was at street level and patrons could clearly see our banners through the large pane glass windows. We could see panicked security officials inside trying to figure what to do as they directed patrons who were arriving to the market centre. We were determined to stay until Jon Love began his ‘lessons in leadership’ and were hoping to get a glimpse of the business ‘icon’ through the large window pane.

However, while waiting for Jon Love to arrive and with our banner in hand facing the glass pane, TMX people lowered the shades so that we could no longer see inside and patrons could no longer see us. Furthermore, the huge TMX colour electronic billboard outside was turned off by security. From the street the place now looked abandoned. Despite these developments we continued to hand out leaflets to patrons arriving. Soon after we had set up our banners outside by the entrance security came out and informed us that we were on private property and we would have to move to the sidewalk some 80 feet away from the venue. We were threatened with trespass. We refused to move. The cops were called. About a half hour later three police cars arrived along with at least eight bicycle cops – a total of about 15 cops altogether – to deal with seven protesters, most of us seniors, and a small dog – also a senior. When the police sergeant approached us we pointed out that the number of officers responding was a bit of an overkill. His answer was – “this is what happens when you have a slow day in Toronto”. Security was adamant that we had to get off their property and move to the sidewalk. It was clear that the police sergeant was not interested in arresting anyone.

So, after about ten minutes of negotiations with security and the police we agreed to move away from the doors and set up our banner about 40 feet away from the doors but still on TMX property. While we were still on the property and a few minutes before we were getting ready to pack up and leave Brian noticed three men who had approached the banner and stood about 20 feet away. He was pretty sure that the short man in the middle was John Love. When Brian alerted me of this I looked over and I got a quick glimpse of the men before they turned away. It certainly looked like Jon Love was the small man in the middle. Had this legend of the Canadian business world come to us waving a white flag or was I just imagining this? Whether or not it was the ‘iconic’ Jon Love that Brian and I saw, one thing is for certain – 214-230 Sherbourne remains important to our community and wanted him to know that our fight for social housing at 214-230 Sherbourne was not over.



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