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May 2008

**THE Bulletin** FREE  
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Brew/Vin Pub-Restaurant  
67 Front at Church  
cestwhat.com  
Vol. XI, No. V

## *Mosque Park?*

# **Moss Park dome to serve area Muslims**

*By: Duncan McAllister*

The Downtown Skyline is about to get another dome. And no, it's not another sports stadium with corporate naming rights. This dome is a bit different.

The Umar Bin Khatab mosque, currently located at 240 Parliament St. near Regent Park, is planning to build a new mosque on the site of what is now a parking lot at the intersection of Sherbourne and Shuter streets. The site selection follows years and inquires with the city and Toronto Community Housing with respect to the group purchasing a property in the east Downtown area to build a new mosque.

The transaction is still in early stages- TCH has only recently issued an offer of sale, while Umar Bin Khatab mosque has just signed an agreement for purchase of sale. The buyer must still undertake due diligence including background work, design, financials and obtaining permits. TCH will have the opportunity to review and approve the site plan based on their needs and requirements.

The public will have the opportunity for input through the regular design process.

The underutilized Moss Park site was chosen since there is a considerable Muslim population living in the surrounding neighborhood; the new mosque would also serve the future needs of the Regent Park revitalization project.

Certain conditions and restrictions were mandated as part of the sale. The land must only be used for a mosque. It must be one storey plus a dome and it cannot be used for other developments and not to be sold for a profit. In order to assess the value of the property, TCH hired a professional appraiser to evaluate the land.

Being a place of worship, and because of the restrictions placed on the sale, the buyer was offered a price that may have been much less than market value if the land was used for condominium development. Says a city spokesman of the deal, "We offered the group a price that we considered fair, and they considered it fair and the sale's gone through."