



## Answers sought on west-end blackout

### Hydro firms to address residents' concerns

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STAFF REPORTER

West-end activist Jutta Mason and her neighbours want fast answers on last week's blackout.

She emailed MPPs on the residents' behalf and they want to be briefed, she said.

Now Cheri DiNovo, MPP Parkdale-High Park, has called a community meeting for Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Parkdale Public Library, a week after the blackout, so residents can get answers from Toronto Hydro and Hydro One. Councillor Gord Perks for Parkdale-High Park will also attend.

"Why it happened and how they plan on preventing it" are the big questions said DiNovo. "That's what the community needs to hear.

"I thought this had been resolved back in 2003," DiNovo said, referring to the August blackout that blanketed Toronto.

"One of our big interests in this meeting is how to prepare in case such a thing could happen again," said Mason, the administrator for the Centre for Local Research into Public Space, which has added a page on its website devoted to power blackouts.

As well as hearing from the hydro companies, the meeting will include "a show-and-tell" about battery packs, wind-up radios, generators and solar panels as possible backup systems should another blackout happen.

"A Buddhist workshop in the neighbourhood managed to carry on because they had a generator," Mason said.

Last Thursday night, a black pall fell over the west end when a Dufferin St. transformer station flooded, triggered by a malfunctioning valve in the sprinkler system.

"We've got to look at all levels of maintenance history," said Laura Cooke, spokesperson for Hydro One.

"We are undertaking an investigation of the events that caused this valve to open."

The malfunctioning valve is located on the Hydro One side, where the power "is brought into the system as high voltage and then is distributed to Toronto Hydro customers

through a low voltage system or distribution system," Cooke explained.

Power was restored Friday night, announced by Mayor David Miller at 9:40 p.m.

"We want answers," said DiNovo. "If this was a malfunction, simply as a matter of wear and tear, shouldn't all the sprinkler systems be checked to prevent this happening? And to those who really suffered because of costs (due to lost business) is there any recompense?"