

Dec. 2013 Newsletter

Unionville Ratepayers Association

No Members Meeting January 2014

A members meeting will not be held in January. We anticipate a meeting per usual on the first Monday of February, namely February 3, and will keep you informed. In the meantime, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Christmas Party Highlights

Our joint URA/UVA Christmas party, held on December 11 at Varley Gallery, was a big success. We had great attendance from our members and from elected officials – MPP Michael Chan, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Regional Councilor Jim Jones and Ward 3 Councilor Don Hamilton. Also in attendance were at least 5 presidents of other Ratepayer Associations in Markham.

A variety of food and non-alcoholic drinks were served. Our thanks are extended to Greg Calleri of Starbucks for donating the coffee and tea.

The evening was an excellent opportunity to meet elected officials, meet the boards of directors of the two organizations and to just socialize informally with friends and neighbours. We've already had requests to repeat this party for 2014!



Markham Sports, Entertainment and Cultural Centre MSECC ("Arena")

As has been well reported, the Arena was the subject of a 3-day Special Council Meeting on December 2-4. Council heard over 150 deputations, including from URA. The URA deputation is posted on our website under "Issues".

<http://unionvilleratepayers.com/issues.htm>

In the end, Council voted 11-2 in favour of a motion to pursue private funding/private partnerships for construction of the arena as endorsed in the January, 2013 Site Plan. Another motion asks GTASE (Graeme Roustan) or any other proponent to show proof of funds of \$325 million plus construction financing within 6 months.

It is unknown at this time whether GTASE or other proponents will continue to pursue this development under these conditions. Further information may become available at the next Council meeting in late January. URA will continue to monitor developments.

Toogood Pond Improvements

A walk along the Pond will reveal new plantings of shrubs on the west and east sides (currently under snow!) and attractive new post & paddle fencing along the west side. These are part of the City's goose deterrent project. Check it out!

Markham Integrity Commissioner

In June, Markham appointed Justice Donald Cameron to act as the City's Integrity Commissioner (IC). The City has now virtually finalized work on a Council Code of Conduct, which will be a major tool used by the IC to guide his activities. The Code is expected to be adopted in February, 2014.

Main Street Unionville Precinct Master Plan



Work continues by the City and its consultants on this major project. The project has been divided into two parts proceeding in parallel:

- (a) Review of the existing "50/50 restriction" on approvals of additional restaurant space. Council received a staff report on this topic in December which recommended removing the restriction and modifying the Secondary Plan and zoning bylaw to identify what uses are prohibited and what are permitted. Council will be convening a Statutory Public Meeting in early 2014.
- (b) Development of Precinct Master Plan. As you know, a public information meeting was held in November on 5 focus areas. An additional public meeting was scheduled for December, but has been moved to early 2014.

URA will continue to be involved at all levels and in all aspects of this important project.

New Funding for Public Transit

Improved transit is the single most important infrastructure investment for our region to cope with the additional 2.5 million new people (and potentially 1 million additional cars) anticipated for our region in the next 18 years. Finding the money to build and operate new transit, in a time of high government deficits, is a challenge. On December 12, the Ontario Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel, chaired by Anne Golden, issued its report. New transit funding tools were recommended – primarily a gas/diesel tax and an increase in corporate income tax.

With the Panel report now in place, the Province has now received at least 6 major reports recommending new funding tools. Premier Wynne has stated that funding tools will be part of the Spring, 2014 Budget. Clearly this will also become a major issue in any upcoming provincial election.

The URA board is considering holding an information session on this topic in early 2014. In the meantime, should you want more information, read the Panel's report at transitpanel.ca, or visit the Civic Action website your32.com.



What is the URA?

A non-partisan association of the residents of Unionville

- ✓ Boundaries: Warden Ave. to McCowan Rd. and Sixteenth Ave. to Hwy 407
- ✓ Founded in 1974 to protect the interests of the community
- ✓ Registered with the Province of Ontario and the Town of Markham

What does URA do?

- ✓ Stays current on events, activities and issues in Unionville
- ✓ Keeps our members informed through regular email broadcasts and monthly meetings (with guest speakers on hot topics)
- ✓ Ensures our residents' views are known and communicated to local, regional and provincial government officials and representatives
- ✓ Provides information sheets on our website on active committees
- ✓ Organizes special events (e.g. All-Candidates meetings during elections, issue based meetings)

Join Us!!

Your Voice
Makes Our Voice Stronger

For more membership info, please go to our web site

<http://www.unionvilleratepayers.com/membership.htm>