

## December 12<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party



Unionville Residents' Association will be hosting our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Christmas Party with Unionville Villager Association and South Unionville Residents Forum

**Date :** December 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 (Monday) 6:30 – 9 PM

**Venue :** Historic Unionville Train Station

**Features :** Light refreshments, finger food and entertainment

**Please join us and celebrate the season!!**

## Historic Unionville Community Vision Committee - Update

Since our last update (see October URA newsletter), the committee, which includes URA representation, has continued to meet monthly on a long list of items. Here is a brief status report on the key items:

Public Washrooms at 185 Main (by the stairs). City staff presented a feasibility study to General Committee to construct public washrooms at this location at a cost of \$430K. Both URA and the Vision Committee chair gave deputations in support of the proposal, and urged start of construction in 2017. However, the president of the BIA, speaking as an individual, expressed misgivings about the orientation and lot siting of the washrooms.

## Committee – Update (continue)

Accordingly, General Committee agreed to hold public consultations in 2017 and there will be no construction until 2018 earliest.

Upkeep and Maintenance of Property and Streetscape. Appearance and upkeep of the commercial properties on Main Street has improved significantly, as Markham bylaw officers have walked the street and issued warnings and orders.

Development in Floodplain and Special Policy Areas. Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) gave a very informative presentation to committee in November, clarifying the very significant issues with building a parking structure east of Main Street. Assuming the east side property owners can agree, TRCA recommended a consolidated surface parking lot similar to that at the Evergreen Brick Works. TRCA also expressed significant concerns with expansion of the commercial buildings on the east side of Main Street, but would be willing to discuss specific modest proposals.

Occasional Vehicular Access/Parkview Public School. Agreement has been reached with Parkview School allowing occasional vehicle access from school property to the west side parking areas during Main Street closures. A Memorandum of Understanding is being drafted for Section 37 Funds. Many millions of dollars have been collected by the City from developments in our Ward. The committee is exploring whether some of these funds could be used for public realm works and/or a development coordinator, increased Staff at the Bylaw Enforcement Office



## Metrolinx Update

In November, we participated in a Metrolinx public meeting at the Cornell Community Centre. The URA has been pushing to target Unionville for one of these gatherings, and we're pleased they have agreed to schedule something for early in 2017. Our initial impression is that Metrolinx is working hard to communicate and listen, and for our region their process has been to work their way north with communities along the Stouffville GO line in advance of electrification activity. So a meeting in January or February will be very timely, and we will ensure all members are informed of the meeting when it gets scheduled.

In the meantime, we have submitted a number of specific questions of interest to Unionville residents to their planning team, and at Metrolinx request, members of the URA Transportation Subcommittee will meet with them in advance of the larger public meeting. An overview of the general GO electrification project was provided at our last URA Members' meeting, but areas of specific interest for our members address many aspects of Metrolinx responsibility. These include their role in leading creation of the Mobility Hub concept at the Unionville station, their plans to add 300+ more parking spaces there, steps to address the current egress and ingress bottlenecks, potential station expansion, work schedule and impacts (including noise and tree removal) of double-tracking, "turnaround" arrangements north of the Unionville station, proposed grade separations.

## Toogood Pond Skating

On October 31 City Council voted for the status quo regarding skating on Toogood Pond; that is no monitoring or clearing the ice, but no enforced ban on skating either. After almost a year of work by a working group -- including representatives of the URA and UVA, 4 city councillors, (including Ward 3 councillor Don Hamilton), and senior city staff -- nothing has changed and we face our fourth winter without the centre of winter life in Unionville. City staff had researched the services of a Quebec-based ice-engineering firm, with costs shared with the city of

## Toogood Pond Skating (continue)



Toronto who will be using the engineers to monitor Grenadier Pond. But the \$100,000+ annual cost for an average of 15 days of skating, and an overwhelming fear of liability, proved too much for Council and staff.

A proposal from community members of the City to use ice-safety standards developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, (as is done by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority to maintain a lake for skating near Orangeville), at far less cost than the ice engineering firm, was never seriously considered by either staff or council. However if volunteers are willing to maintain the ice, the City will support creation of two rinks just east of the Toogood Pond parking lot with boards and a water hookup. If you are interested in getting involved, contact the City of Markham parks and operations department.

## Increased Staff at Bylaw Enforcement

Issues related to bylaw enforcement in such areas as property standards, tree removal and temporary signs often arise in our neighborhoods. In September, Markham's Bylaw Enforcement Manager, Chris Alexander, briefed members on some of these topics. We anticipate that bylaw enforcement needs will grow, especially as the City's work on secondary suites (SS), rooming houses (RH) and short-term accommodations (STA) come to a head. URA was supportive when Deputy Mayor Heath entered a councillor request for more enforcement staff into the Budget 2017 process. Unfortunately, the request was denied for the 2017 Budget, but it was agreed to re-examine the need for additional Bylaws officers after the SS, RH and STA bylaw is approved by Council, likely early in the New Year.

## What We Heard – Let's Talk Housing

The government of Canada made a commitment in budget 2016 to engage public and define the federal role in helping Canadian to meet their housing need spectrum. The National consultation as described in November newsletter "Let's Talk Housing" was launched in June 2016 with 7,000 citizen participate in this public consultation.

An analysis of the 4 months public consultation was recently published in a report "what we heard - Shaping Canada's National Housing Strategy" with some of the key finding as follows

- ✓ Canadian wants better housing outcome not just for themselves but also for family and individual with low income, homeless and victims fleeing violence
- ✓ Canadian needs housing they can afford and that meets their needs was the most important housing outcome
- ✓ Indigenous people needs housing level in par with non-indigenous people with parallel strategy living on and off reserve, in cities and remote area
- ✓ The housing policy will need to be people focus so that families or individual have access to jobs, schools, transportation and community supports to lift low income Canadian out of poverty
- ✓ A National Housing Strategy will better coordinate various housing initiatives nationwide with clear outcome and measurable targets
- ✓ A National Housing Strategy should examine whether existing laws, policies and practices are sufficient to prevent homelessness, forced evictions, and discrimination in having adequate housing
- ✓ A National Housing Strategy should take an integrated approach building with all levels government and partners in collaboration and with flexible solution to achieve a national vision of housing
- ✓ Housing experts stressed that better and more data is needed to understand housing condition and needs in order to develop informed cost-effective solution

The ministry of Families, Children and Social development will use the information received in public consultation to develop recommendation for a National Housing Strategy to be announced in 2017 with priority be placed to consult indigenous organization to meet the housing need of indigenous Canadian.



## 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 City 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 relevant topics
- ✓ Ensures that residents' views are known and communicated to local, regional and provincial government officials
- ✓ Maintains a website that contains information on active issues
- ✓ Organizes special events, such as candidates' meetings

## Join Us!!

Together Our Voice  
Is Stronger

Membership information can found at:

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