



Workshop on Projects for Section 37 Funding

JUNE 2017

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Member's Meeting
Monday June 5th @ 7PM
Pan Am Center Room 2

June 5th Members' Meeting

Our next members' meeting will be on Monday June 5th, 2017 at 7:00 pm at the Pan Am Centre in Committee Room 2. **We will be having a detailed discussion on York Downs Developments, and holding a workshop on Section 37 Funding including a 'dotmocracy' to identify priority items.** We encourage you to attend and provide your insights. We look forward to seeing you on Monday June 5th, 2017!

As members know, Section 37 of the Planning Act allows a municipality to secure "community benefits" in consideration of an agreeable increase in density or height of a development. Markham implemented Section 37 benefits a few years ago, and City Council is now developing a new public consultation process. Due to the high level of development in the Unionville area, it is anticipated that several million dollars may be available for community benefits in our area.

A brainstorming session by URA in 2014 identified numerous potential Section 37 projects. Our June members meeting will poll attendees as to which of those projects, or new ones suggested by members, should have highest priority. The results will be given to Markham Council for their final decision and hopefully approval. The list of projects from 2014 is given below.

Unionville Main Street Area (South to North)

- Build gateway feature at Highway 7
- Connect trail system under Highway 7 east of Main Street
- Extend boardwalk from Stiver Mill along tracks to Highway 7
- Improve parkette west of bandshell
- Open laneway south of Blacksmith Bistro to Fonthill Blvd
- Expand Varley Gallery
- Add heritage façade on Varley Gallery
- Build secure lighting on path from Main St. to Library
- Improve Chambery Park
- Expand Unionville Library
- Revamp Toogood pavilion into nature center

Other Parts of Unionville

- More street lighting on Manhattan Drive
- Kiss and Ride on Snowdon Circle for Centennial GO station
- Regulation Little League baseball diamond
- Construct pathway from Briarwood Cres to Carlton Park

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Report from URA Forum on Housing Affordability in Markham

Over 125 members and residents attended the URA Forum on Housing Affordability, held on a rainy Saturday, May 6 at Markham Council Chambers. Expert speakers from the banking sector, provincial, regional and municipal government, government agencies and the development sector spoke on their perspectives of the problem and potential remedies. This was followed by a panel discussion responding to questions from the audience.

All presentations are available on the URA website.

Housing (non)affordability is a complex problem with numerous factors driving prices with no single solution. For example, Ontario's Fair Housing Plan, introduced on April 20, identifies 16 initiatives on the supply and demand side that will hopefully improve affordability. More initiatives were passed in Ontario's Promoting Affordable Housing Act of 2016. Similarly, York Region and Markham have about 9 affordable housing initiatives and studies, including a Local Municipal Housing Working Group that is developing an incentives "pick list".

Over the period 2002 to 2017 (15 years), Remington has experienced cost increases contributing to the rising house prices.

Some of the most interesting statistics were presented by Randy Peddigrew of The Remington Group, who showed the relative increases in four categories of costs that contribute to housing costs. Randy also recommended several initiatives to increase housing supply. Over the period 2002 to 2017 (15 years), Remington has experienced the following cost increases:

Category	Total Cost Increase 2002-2017	Annual Cost Increase 2002-2017
Construction Costs	36%	2.40% per year
Servicing Costs	62%	4% per year
Development Charges	370%	24% per year
Land Costs	1345%	89% per year



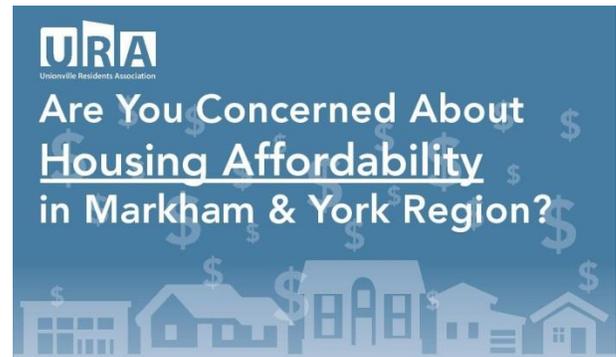
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URA Forum (cont'd)

URA intends to follow up on several of these suggested and in-progress initiatives. Our focus will be on those items that can be worked on at the York Region or Markham level. Of the numerous items possible, our thinking at this time is to focus on:

- Permitting licensed Secondary Suites in Markham (as part of the Markham's Comprehensive Zone Bylaw Amendment project (CBZA), URA is on record as supporting these)
- Permitting licensed rooming houses in intensification areas (as part of CBZA, URA is on record as supporting this)
- Developing an official URA position on short-term rentals, eg AirBnB. (This is also part of CBZA)
- Encouraging purpose-built rentals
- Encouraging family-sized units in high density condo buildings
- Encouraging inclusionary zoning in Official Plans, assuming enabling provincial regulations are passed
- Streamlining approvals of new developments
- Scoping vacant house tax in Markham
- Exploring conversion of vacant or idle industrial land to mixed use developments (eg Dennison Business Park)

We intend to invite some of our speakers back, or bring in more specialists, to start to drill down deeper into some of these potential remedies. We welcome input from our members and residents at any time.



Unionville Festival

The 48th Annual Unionville Festival returns to Unionville on June 3 and 4 -- bigger and better than ever!

Bavarian Garden is back!

A record number of craft vendors, artisans, artists and food vendors will be set up on Main Street. Family Fun Day is back at Crosby Park. The Crazy Krafts will return to Toogood Pond. BeFit v2 will be here, and don't forget the parade, music and fun for all ages. For more information visit www.unionvillefestival.com.

Put the Festival in your calendar now and invite your friends, family and neighbours.

See you on Main Street Unionville, June 3 and 4! **COME VISIT THE URA BOOTH ON SATURDAY**



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Housing Affordability Forum – Media Coverage

The May 6th Housing Affordability Forum was well received by the community and there was media coverage by Economist & Sun, Ming Pao Daily and Singtao Daily before and after the event.

According to Ming Pao Daily "It's hard for house price not to be high". As narrated by Remington Vice President of Development Randy Peddigrew, in the last 15 years land prices have increased 13.45 times. In addition, development projects take 12 years to complete and it's difficult for developers to not raise house prices to cover the cost of development. Bank of Montreal's Economist Sal Guatieri believes that the new Ontario Fair Housing Act is not effective in curbing the soaring house prices as non-resident buyers are not the only source pushing housing prices. Ontario's economy in 2016 is relatively good with 2.5% GDP growth, decreasing unemployment rates, low interest rates, preferred settlement destination (in the GTA) and long development permit processes which contribute to the housing demand. The housing market is speculated to burst if there is a 2% increase in interest rates however this will not happen unless the American economy does poorly.

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The Singtao Daily captured York Region chief city planner Val Shuttleworth reporting that the average house price in York Region has increased by 138% over the last 10 years. However, income has only increased by 20% making it difficult to match income and house prices. York Region's housing general manager Rick Farrell stated that the average monthly rental is \$1,500; however the shortage in supply is creating a high demand for second suites. York Region is aiming to increase affordable housing by providing 97 units in Lakeside, 202 units in Richmond Hill, 162 units in the Woodbridge redevelopments and 250 units through the Unionville Home Society. In the current Official Plan, all developments have to provide 25% affordable housing. However, the affordable housing calculation is based on family income, meaning it is a high threshold.

Unionville Residents Association is actively involved with the Unionville Home Society redevelopment and will continue to seek opportunities to advocate solutions on the housing affordability issue.

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Positive Result - Fines and Donation for Tree Infractions at 47/51 Gainesville

On May 17, 2017, Provincial Court rendered a verdict and set the fines in respect to the tree infractions at 47/51 Gainesville Ave, Unionville. The Crown stated that he had been in discussions with the Defense Counsel and had agreed to a guilty plea on 3 counts/offences relating to damaging trees without a Tree Permit and to damaging trees without a Road Occupancy Permit. The Justice of the Peace asked for submissions from the Crown as to the appropriate fine. The Crown asked for a fine of \$1,500 per offence, for a total of \$4,500. This was agreed to by the Defence Counsel. Prior to finalizing the fine, Pam Scarrow, a local resident, asked if she could submit a victim impact statement on behalf of the residents. Her request was denied after the Crown admitted that he had the victim impact statement and did not wish to present it. The Defence Counsel also objected to the submission of a victim impact statement in court. The Justice of the Peace accepted the recommendation of the Crown and Defence and the entire matter was over within 5 minutes.

In addition to the fine, the defendant was required to plant 18 new trees, or pay an equivalent fee of \$10,800.



Needless to say, the outcome of the trial was extremely disappointing. At a media scrum after the hearing, the URA expressed concern that the amount of the fine would not serve as a deterrent in the future to others who choose to illegally cut down trees. The applicable bylaw permits a fine between \$500 and \$100,000 per offence. There was clearly room within the bylaw to argue for a much larger fine in this case, particularly as two of the trees were on City property and had a total compensation value of over \$75,000.

It was subsequently discovered that, in addition to the fine, the defendant had also made a donation of \$45,000 to Markham's Trees for Tomorrow fund. The donation was not raised in court.

Although the legal tactics of a donation rather than a fine are not clear to us, the URA is pleased with the total financial quantum of more than \$50,000 in this tree infraction matter.

URA believes more work needs to be done to strengthen Markham's tree bylaw. The recent tree preservation workshop hosted by the City, at which URA presented seven ideas, is a good start. It will be held Tuesday, May 2, 7 pm at the Markham Civic Centre.

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York Downs Development

The second of at least four meetings took place on Tuesday evening in Council Chambers to look more closely at several aspects of the York Downs proposed redevelopment plan. This meeting was on environmental issues. Presentations were received from 2 of the applicant's experts, and several City staff. The Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) was in attendance to answer questions. About 200 people attended and about 20 deputations were received, including several from the URA YD subcommittee.

A discussion took place on threatened and endangered species but until the Ministry Of Natural Resources responds with their report, not yet received, real dialogue is premature. A lot of discussion took place on trees. There is no change to the plan to remove nearly 4,000 trees, and many individuals spoke against this plan. The applicant plans to raise the ground level by up to 4 meters in the developed areas, for several reasons, and along with the need to install infrastructure, this makes tree preservation difficult. Transplanting mature trees is apparently not very successful; the applicant has offered to provide 12,000 new (small) trees as compensation. The final plan on trees will be negotiated between the City and the applicant.



A lot of discussion took place on storm water management and flood protection, as the TRCA's initial comments report was received about a week before this meeting. The report highlighted several areas where the plans do not conform to existing policies, for example locating storm water management ponds within a flood plain, locating pipes 1.5 meters below ground level instead of 2.5, infringing in to natural heritage feature etc. Neither the applicant, nor staff nor the TRCA responded to any particular issues within the report, but referred instead to a lengthy process of negotiation ahead. It appears that despite the City having policies in place, there are few hard and fast regulations to be followed, rather it is the final result, and particularly the expected impact on flood prone downstream Unionville, that will determine the outcome of this negotiation. Compounding this is the fact that several developers have challenged the 2014 City Official Plan, including environmental systems issues. The next OMB hearing on that challenge is not scheduled until early next year.

The Province recently announced plans to significantly restructure the OMB. In response to a specific question, the applicant indicated they had appealed the entire YD development proposal to the OMB in order to be grandfathered under existing regulations. The next meetings will be on June 12th, Traffic and Transit, and on June 19th, Community Design Plan and Built Form.

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 The poster features a central red banner with the text "UNIONVILLE FESTIVAL ONTARIO" and "June 3 • 4". The year "2017" is displayed in large green and yellow numbers, with a circular logo containing a tree and figures. Four circular inset photos show: a bagpiper in a kilt, a couple in red and white historical costumes, a woman in a black dress with a red fan, and a group of children posing for a photo.

2017

UNIONVILLE
FESTIVAL

ONTARIO

June 3 • 4

共慶於人村嘉年華

Our 48th Festival!

SATURDAY

- Festival Parade
- Crazy Krafts Race
- FunZone by the Rinks
- Village Market
- Music on Main Street

SUNDAY

- Funky 5K Run/2K Walk
- Family Fun Day in Crosby Park
- BeFit Day, Markets and much more

- Saturday evening Fireworks

For all the event details & updates, go to

www.unionvillefestival.com   