



September 2017

URA September 2017 Members' Meeting

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Affordable Rental Housing – A challenge in York Region

1/3 Markham Household unable to afford MLS rental

We have invited Newmarket Deputy Mayor John Taylor to talk about affordable housing in our September members' meeting with details as follows:

Date: September 7th, 2017 (Thursday) 7:00 PM
Venue: Markham PanAM Centre, Committee Room 3
Theme: Making Rental Work in York Region
Speaker: John Taylor, Deputy Mayor Newmarket

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, September 7th, 2017.

Affordable Rental Housing

A healthy economy requires an adequate supply of housing across the entire price spectrum whether owning or renting. With the real estate market continuing to boom in the last few years, housing has become less and less affordable causing many low income persons or families to be unable to afford a rental unit.

Per Toronto Real Estate Board Private Rental Market 2017 Q2 report, Markham's average rental cost is \$1,764 per month, an increase of 7.1% from Q2 2016. Using the common definition of affordable housing as being 30% of household income used for dwelling, this means a \$70,560 household income is required to afford renting a private apartment. Using a discount rate of 2.5% annual salary increase, this is approximately equivalent to \$60,000 in 2010 census when 33% of Markham households were below \$60,000 income.

TREB Rental	Markham		Toronto		York Region	
	Q2 2017	Q2 2016	Q2 2017	Q2 2016	Q2 2017	Q2 2016
bachelor suite	\$1,250	n/a	\$1,574	\$1,438	\$1,250	\$1,200
1 bedroom	\$1,597	\$1,475	\$1,950	\$1,789	\$1,623	\$1,492
2 bedrooms	\$2,046	\$1,874	\$2,775	\$2,567	\$2,080	\$1,884
3 bedrooms	\$2,330	\$2,371	\$3,650	\$3,500	\$2,583	\$2,562
average	\$1,764	\$1,647	\$2,243	\$2,072	\$1,807	\$1,661
change %	7.10%		8.25%		8.78%	

Affordable Rental Market – A challenge in York Region

York Region has been working since 2014 on bringing affordable rental units to the Region, as part of the 10 year housing plan. The challenge is there is currently only 11.5% housing stock as rental which is well below the Ontario average of 28.4% or the national average of 30.6%. An inadequate amount of private purpose-built rental developments has been constructed in the Region and non-profit or government-assisted developments are unable to meet the demand. Between 2003 and 2013, only 1% of home construction was being built for rental.

There is reluctance in the private sector to build rental apartments as the builder has to fund the whole construction without any income until after the renter moves in as a tenant. On the other hand, a developer will be able to get the buyer to fund part of the cost of building the condominium through a down payment at time of purchase.

In 2015, the Human Service Planning Board HSPB of York Region worked in partnership with Ryerson University to identify an incentive package to encourage private sector construction of purpose-built rental. In the fall 2015, HSPB worked with the GTA Housing Action Lab to conduct another study into the degree of incentives required to encourage affordable ownership and rental development.

A large number of incentives have been identified including

- Loans and grants such as \$2.5B Federal Affordable Rental Housing Financing
- Land contribution
- Planning and development fee exemption
- Property tax exemption

- Reduce parking requirement
- higher density bonus
- expedited permit process
- housing agreement
- smaller unit size
- housing allowance
- municipal contribution

Ontario's Promoting Affordable Housing Act 2016 was passed in December 2016. It gives municipalities the option to implement inclusionary zoning, which requires affordable housing units to be included in residential developments. An inclusionary zoning bylaw is being developed in York Region which will add more affordable rental units.

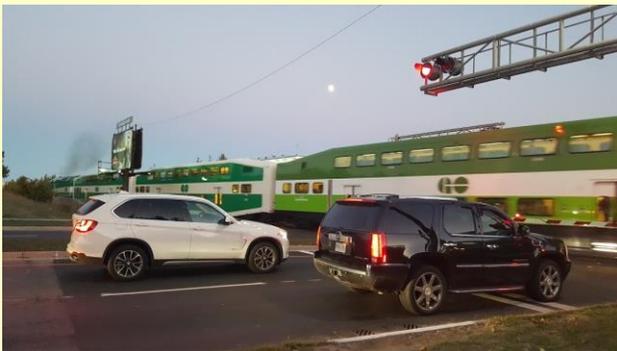


In the meantime, York Region has also piloted a purpose-built rental project "212 Davis Drive" in Newmarket. York Region agreed to defer development charges for up to 36 months, secured against the mortgage rather than through a letter of credit. The Town of Newmarket also agreed to defer development charges, building permit fees and cash-in-lieu of parkland for up to 36 months.

To learn more about rental housing solutions in York Region, please come and attend our September 7th URA Member's meeting. We have invited Newmarket Deputy Mayor John Taylor to talk about "Making Rental Housing Work in York Region".

Stouffville GO train update

Our July newsletter described the train service changes implemented in June. While generally positive, there were issues with the train whistle at 11:00pm and with the reduced frequency of trips. In August, Mayor Scarpitti and Markham staff met with GO senior management to discuss these problems. We are advised that GO and Markham agreed to expedite work on anti-whistling, hopefully to be implemented in early 2018 rather than late 2018 as originally planned. GO also agreed to examine schedule changes. A citizens group, including URA representatives, is scheduled to meet with Metrolinx in early September to discuss progress on these undertakings.



Development at 4031 – 16th Avenue (Hughes Farm)

Our last report on this project was in our newsletter of summer, 2016, indicating the property had changed ownership. Since then, the proposal has apparently changed from 13 single detached homes to 6 very large (5000 sq. ft. +) homes. This will be more compatible with neighboring resident wishes. It is not known what the plan is for the heritage farm house on the property. Although a new application has not been filed with the City, the heritage aspects will go before the Heritage Markham committee in September.

Unionville Home Society Redevelopment

After two years of planning and community consultation, the proponents finally submitted an application for OP and zoning amendments to the City this spring, with site plan applications expected this summer. In summary the application involves:

- Minto Communities – redevelopment of the Heritage Village bungalows with 152 townhouses
- York Region – construction of an 11-story 260-unit affordable rental apartment building in the middle of the site, targeted to seniors
- UHS – provision for a future expansion of the existing Unionville long term care facility
- A community centre and a senior's hub, each 6000 sq. ft. in size.

The Community Liaison Committee met in June. Concerns were raised about several issues, including transportation, tree preservation, parkland, parking and construction impacts. Construction is scheduled to start in May, 2018, with work on the York Region tower commencing first.

51 Gainsville Update

The application to build a large and tall building in place of the current property was again before the Committee of Adjustment (CofA) on August 9th. The design had been altered only minimally since the last meeting and apparently the owner refused to change the design further. Four residents, plus URA, spoke opposing the application. The CofA members appeared piqued that the owner/agent had not complied with their earlier direction to reduce the floor area and height and DENIED the application. We wait to see what will happen now to this property!

Shared Accommodation

With a number of Public and Council Meetings scheduled in the Fall to discuss shared accommodation, the following URA positions have been established and presented to Council in June 2016:

Secondary Suites:

Definition: *“a second residential unit in a detached, semi-detached house or row house that consists of one or more rooms designed, occupied or intended for use, including occupancy, by one or more persons as an independent and separate residence in which a facility for cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities are provided for the exclusive use of such person or persons”*

- Only two residences to be permitted in one property (Primary residence and Secondary Suite)
- Restrict the size of the Suite to no greater than 45% of the Primary residence
- Ensure they are registered with the City and are subject to inspections by Fire Safety and Bylaw Enforcement staff.
- At least one additional parking space is available.

Rooming House:

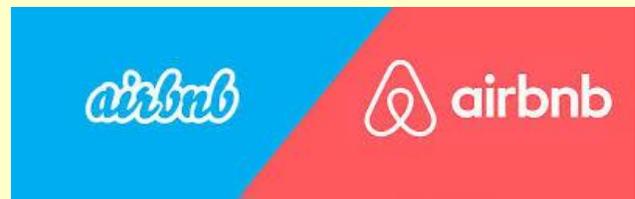
Definition: *“a building that does not exceed 3 storeys, where lodging is provided for 4 or more persons in return for remuneration or the provision of services (or both); and where rooms do not have both bathrooms and kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of individual occupants”*

- Restrict Rooming Houses to existing or new intensification areas.
- Rooming Houses should not be permitted as conversions of detached or semi-detached single family homes in low rise neighbourhoods.
- License Rooming Houses for a specific number of residents and a fee will be required

Rooming Housing (continue)

- Owner of Rooming House must comply with all Fire Safety regulations
- Non-compliance will be subject to a significant fine
- One parking space for every two residents.
- Rooming Houses should be restricted to owner occupied buildings to minimize the risk of poor maintenance.

Short Term Accommodation STA



During Shared Accommodation discussions at Council concerns with Short Term Accommodations (for example Airbnb) became an issue. URA has now developed a position on this subject, which has not yet been presented to Council. URA believes that not permitting STAs, as has been suggested by some Councillors, is not good policy, as STAs do offer economic benefits such to tourism and to owner cash flow. Toronto is proposing to permit STAs if they are in an owner's primary residence. **Our proposal** builds on Toronto's, with the caveat that full homes cannot be offered, in order to inhibit party houses. Our position is as follows:

- Only permitted in owner occupied primary residence.
- No more than two rooms to be available for STA
- Rented for no more than 120 days/year
- Registered with the City and subject to Fire Safety inspections.
- A “hotel tax” to be payable over and above the STA fee.
- Property owner to ensure appropriate insurance.
- Assumed property owner will inform CRA of income and expenses.

Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to be replaced by Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)

In May, after two years of consultation, the Provincial Government introduced legislation (Bill 139) to essentially replace the OMB with a Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). Bill 139 has the potential to radically change the planning system in Ontario. The Bill is largely consistent with URA's submissions during the consultation period. Major changes include:

- Significant procedural changes
- Establishing support centres to provide free and independent advice and representation to citizens
- Elimination of “de novo” hearings for some appeals (gives much more deference to municipal councils)
- Limits on scope of appeals (eg approved Official Plans or Secondary Plans0
- Allows municipalities to set up Local Appeal Boards to hear some appeals rather than the LPAT.



Minor Variance appeared to shift from setback variance to volume massing

Concerns with Committee of Adjustment

With our on-going concern with the CofA, an analysis of their decisions between January 2016 and April 2017, was undertaken. A summary of some of the results and extracts from the report follows.

Total no. of Applications	268
Total no, of “Minor Variances”	659
Total no of Applications DENIED	10 (3.7%)
Total no. of Applications APPROVED	185 (69%)
Total no. of Applications DEFERRED	73 (27.2%)

Note that many (most) Applications when DEFERRED were brought back to the CofA with changes - some very minor - and were usually APPROVED. A few Applications were DEFERRED several times before finally being APPROVED.

The Gladki & Associates “Task 4B Review & Assessment of Minor Variances” report of August 2015 (analysing CofA decisions between 1970 and June 2015) clearly indicates that the number of “minor variances” has increased over each decade, reaching almost 1800 in the 2000s. At the time of his writing (August 2015) the total was almost 800 variances for the 2010s (2010 - 2015) decade.

In the analysis of this report, the variances over just a 16 month period were 659, so the number of variances is continuing to increase.

Mr Gladki indicates that the variances in the 2010 - 2015 analysis, the most numerous variances were Building Volume related (27%, having increased from 13% in the 2000s), Set-back related (25% having reduced from 41% in the previous decade) and Lot-size related (18% up from 14% previously).

The recent 2016/2017 analysis appears to follow this trend, with Building Volume related (“Massing”) at 40% of the variances, Set-back related at 26% and Lot-size related just 9%.

Concerns with Committee of Adjustment (continued)

Clearly then the continuing trend is to bigger houses with significantly larger floor area, height and depth parameters than the Bylaws allow, being approved by the CofA.

As there appears to be no agreed definition of a “minor variance”, URA will be recommending the following, plus several other items:

1. Committee of Adjustment should strive to ensure compliance to existing Bylaws.
2. Should a “minor variance” be found to be reasonable or necessary, then CofA should insist:
 - +5% maximum over the Bylaws for “Massing” variances; i.e. Floor area, Height, Depth.
 - +10% maximum over the Bylaws for other variances
 - DEFER all others until the Application is within these parameters
 - DENY all Applications if they appear before the CofA for the third time if guidelines and direction are not met.

A new trend has been appearing at recent CofA meetings whereby Applications have been made and approved, to change the intent of the Bylaw - for example, to change to a usage where a Bylaw prohibits such a use. This appears to go beyond the authority granted to the CofA in Section 45 of the Planning Act. URA will continue to monitor this emerging trend.

Committee of Adjustment appeared to approve application which changes the intent of bylaw.

Status of Rouge Valley Trail



As members know, our beautiful Rouge Valley Trail is a major asset to our community. Construction of Phase 1 (Unionville to Milne Conservation Area) and Phase 2 (Tuclor Lane to 14th Ave) is complete. Phase 3 (most of the Milne to Tuclor section) has been tendered for completion in late 2018. Phase 4 (balance of Milne-Tuclor plus 14th to Rouge Valley National Urban Park) is yet to be started. The video below shows the beauty of this trail and the future plans.

