

Can this House be Saved?

If you're like me, you've probably wondered what's the story behind that seemingly abandoned and boarded up house at 8127 Bayview Avenue next to Thornlea Secondary School.



8127 Bayview Avenue

In truth, the Carl Reesor James House, built in 1912, is owned by the City of Toronto and is located 44 metres south of the Bayview Underground Reservoir owned and operated by the city through its Water Division. The reservoir is one of ten operated by Toronto as part of its complex network of treatment plants, pumping stations, storage tanks/towers and reservoirs. It serves to provide safe drinking water to all Thornhill residents and those living north in Richmond Hill and beyond. The house, which was acquired in the early 1970s as part of the land for the reservoir, has historical value for its association with the James family of Thornhill. They played a significant role in the agricultural economy of our community from the 1870s to the 1940s and the political administration of Markham Township from 1877 to 1886. As the local Ward Councillor and chair of Markham's Land, Building and Parks Committee, I discovered that six years ago Toronto applied to have the house demolished as part of a construction plan to extend the reservoir's usefulness and help meet York Region's future drinking water needs. Fortunately, Markham Council quickly designated the home as a property of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to prevent its demolition. The heritage designation should protect it from that fate. However, we recently discovered that Toronto Water has disconnected the utilities servicing the home.

In order to avoid "demolition by neglect," the practice of allowing a building to deteriorate to the point that demolition becomes necessary or restoration becomes unreasonable, Markham's Real Property team is now in discussions with their counterparts and those at Toronto Water.

The hope is that by working together with our Toronto counterparts we can find a suitable tenant or owner who will love the house and work hard to preserve it for future generations.

If you know of someone interested in acquiring and restoring the home, and adapting it for a new use, please write to heritage@markham.ca.

For the latest updates on the COVID-19 pandemic and Markham's response, please visit: www.markham.ca/covid19



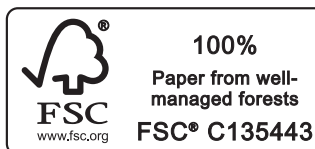
Around the Ward in 80...Words

Updates on previous Ward 1 News items...

- Tridel Development at Royal Orchard & Bayview**
Project approved by Markham Council, 11-2 (1 opposed, 1 abstention) December 10, 2019.
- Proposed New Development: 36-60 Steeles Avenue East and 37-63 Highland Park Boulevard**
Zonix Group, working with Markham staff, has adjusted its plans based on community input and is pursuing a two-phased approach.
- Shouldice Hospital lands owned by Liberty Development**
Development application expected May-June 2020.
- Jesus the King Melkite Catholic Church, 1 Lyndhurst Drive**
The church leadership has still not submitted plans to rebuild.
- St. Robert Catholic High School**
Significant traffic-flow, road and parking lot improvements made. Markham Fire's best point of secondary emergency access under consideration.
- 45 John Street, Thornhill Heritage Conservation District**
Heritage Markham unanimously approved new home plans February 12, 2020.
- EJ Sand Public School Rebuild**
Still awaiting Ministry of Education approval to proceed.

Support Thornhill Businesses

We all know how important small businesses are to our economy. Once it's safe for them to reopen, I encourage you to think of them first by shopping at and supporting them. In the meantime, you may consider ordering take-out from your favourite local Thornhill restaurants.



SPRING/SUMMER 2020

WARD 1 NEWS



UPDATE FROM KEITH IRISH, YOUR MARKHAM WARD 1 COUNCILLOR

Dear Residents,

Life can change quickly. I began writing this newsletter before the COVID-19 virus had spread to our doorsteps. Before the danger was fully understood. Before the impact on our healthcare system was calculated. Before we were forced to accept the drastic emergency measures required to reduce its spread and stay healthy.

On March 27 Markham Council held its first-ever virtual Council meeting. Prior to March 19 when the Provincial Government passed the *Municipal Emergency Act (2020)*, municipal councils were not permitted to meet this way. At that meeting, we approved with immediate effect a number of pandemic relief measures described elsewhere in this newsletter.

As we continue to come to terms with the threat posed by the virus and cope with changes to daily life, I want to express gratitude to our healthcare workers and first responders who are working to keep us safe. That gratitude extends as well to those providing essential services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, waste collection, public transit and the movement of goods.

If there's one thing this public health crisis has taught us, it's the importance of community.

Several years ago I read a book by travel writer Tim Cahill called *Pecked To Death By Ducks*. What remained with me was his observation, gleaned from years travelling the world, that humans do what no other animal on earth does: they foul their own nest.

If there is one abiding theme to this edition of my newsletter it is: we can resolve many of our local problems since we cause most of them ourselves. We are in this together.

As Ward Councillor I am in a position to see the good, the bad and the ugly in our community. And while the good far outweighs the rest it takes effort by each of us every day to keep it that way.

Slow down. Be considerate. Drive more carefully. Pick up after your pet. Lend a hand to a neighbour or someone in need. Don't litter. Keep a watchful eye. Say hello. Look out for each other. Return a wave.

"For, in the final analysis, our most common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

– John F. Kennedy

To keep up-to-date please visit my Councillor web page at www.markham.ca > "About The City of Markham" > "City Council" > "Regional & Ward Councillors" > "Ward 1 Councillor Keith Irish". You can sign-up for my electronic newsletter there and even follow me on Twitter for more frequent updates. You **do not need** a Twitter account to do so.

If you have an issue of concern please contact me at kirish@markham.ca / 905-948-5101 or my Executive Assistant Lauren Patton at lpatton@markham.ca / 905-415-7512.

I wish you, your family and friends continued good health.

Keith

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THE OTHER SIDE

Re [Nothing Will Be Perfect Again – And That's Just Fine](#) (Opinion, April 11): Ten things I'll do after COVID-19: I'll wash my hands more often. I'll stay home if I'm sick. I'll get vaccinated. I'll thank people working at the grocery store. I'll donate more. I'll support a basic income. I'll want better care for seniors. I'll value science. I'll recognize the efforts of front-line workers. I'll be very grateful to be Canadian.

Reinhard Reithmeier
Toronto

Globe & Mail, April 13, 2020

This newsletter is distributed using Canada Post walks; a small amount of Ward 8 residents may also receive this.



Contact Centre

If you have an issue regarding municipal services, programs and general inquiries (by-law complaints, garbage pick-up, graffiti, illegal dumping, property standards, park maintenance) please contact the city at 905-477-5530 or customerservice@markham.ca.



@KeithIrish1



Check out "Ward 1 Talk" on YouTube to see me talk about issues important to you while promoting local businesses and places of interest.



Keith Irish



@keith.irish

KEITH
IRISH
COUNCILLOR WARD 1

Council Approved Pandemic Relief Measures

Benefits for Residents	Benefits for Business
No late payment (penalty and interest) charges for residential property taxpayers from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020	No late payment (penalty and interest) charges for non-residential property taxpayers from October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020
Elimination of the 2020 Stormwater Fee of \$50	Elimination of the 2020 Stormwater Fee, a savings of \$560 for a property valued at \$2M
Elimination of the April 1, 2020 water rate increase of 7.8%	Elimination of the April 1, 2020 water rate increase of 7.8%
	Suspension of the Municipal Accommodation Tax from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, to provide relief to hoteliers

Keeping Markham Beautiful

Markham By-law 2017-27 stipulates that the grass on your private property and on the boulevard at the front and/or side of your home must be cut and maintained to 15 centimetres (6 inches) or lower. Hedges and bushes must be kept from being overgrown, the exterior of homes in good repair, painted and maintained, and garbage and recycling containers placed for pick-up no earlier than 7:00 p.m. the day prior to collection. If you see a property in chronic violation of the By-law, please report it to the city's Customer Service team at **905-477-5530** or customerservice@markham.ca. Those that do not comply are likely to receive a visit from a By-law Enforcement Officer. A minimum fee of \$475 may be charged if the city is forced to cut your grass.

Rooming Houses, Multi-Occupant Dwellings, Short-term Rentals

What's permitted? What can be done?

A single-family home that appears overrun and occupied by a number of people unrelated to each other. Cars coming and going at all times of the day and night. Grass grown tall. Garbage set out days in advance of pick-up. General untidiness. Evidence of absentee landlords and their transient renters are everywhere...and it's not good.

The city permits residential property owners to rent up to two bedrooms in a house provided the individual lodging rooms do not contain separate bathroom and cooking facilities for the exclusive use of individual occupants. This type of rental must be for periods of 30 days or more by way of a rental agreement, lease or similar arrangement.

The city does not permit short-term rental accommodation of less than 30 consecutive days, unregistered second suites or the rental of three or more individual rooms in a residential property.

If you see a property that you suspect is operating in contravention of what is described above, please report it to the city's Customer Service team at **905-477-5530** or customerservice@markham.ca

Setting Expectations: What can be done?

The city's combined enforcement teams (By-law, Fire, Building Standards) must be able to form reasonable evidenced-based grounds that a violation is occurring before a property can be inspected. **Suspicion is not enough.** When a complaint is lodged, the investigating officer will contact the complainant and ask a series of questions to help form those grounds, such as:

- Have you seen an advertisement to rent a room, or secondary suite (basement apartment) at this location?
- Have you discussed with an owner or tenant that a secondary suite exists or rooms are being rented?
- Have you been inside the property and observed a secondary suite or rooms for rent?
- Has a separate entrance been added, and have you seen people using it exclusively?

If the officer then forms reasonable grounds to believe there is a violation, the city will request an interior inspection.

Markham's Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and York Regional Police **do not** have a general authority to enter a residential dwelling unless entry is authorized by consent of the owner, the occupier or a warrant is obtained under applicable legislation. If the property owner is cooperative, the city's enforcement policy is to achieve compliance by working collaboratively with everyone involved. The process usually results in eviction proceedings being initiated by the property owner through the provincial Landlord and Tenant Board. Sadly, it can take several months until the problem is resolved.

Illegal Dumping

There are instances across our city where some residents and non-residents alike instead of properly disposing of their household items and garbage at their curbside or recycling depot, choose instead to dump them in our parks and school yards, along our boulevards, and even at the corners of busy intersections.

It's maddening, inconsiderate and difficult to control. And, it's not just household waste. Dump trucks and construction trailers full of excavated soil and debris will drive great distances in the middle of the night to dump illegally in our community and elsewhere.

Putting an end to it is challenging. In the event you happen to see someone dumping illegally I ask that you gather as much information as possible: vehicle description and license plate, description of the person, and the day and time the activity occurred. I do not recommend you approach them; you could be putting yourself in danger. Then report what you witnessed to the city's Customer Service team at **905-477-5530** or customerservice@markham.ca.



Thornhill Ugly

Speeding and Dangerous Driving

I maintain that most instances of speeding and dangerous driving in Thornhill can be solved rather easily by a few strategically placed speed bumps and a few unattended parked police cars serving as a deterrent. Many of the speeding complaints I receive are from residents living on streets where there is no through traffic. It is our friends and neighbours eager to get to wherever they are going and then home again that are being careless. It reminds me of the slogan: "We have met the enemy and it is us."

Regrettably, several years ago Markham Council chose to discontinue the city's speed hump/bump program. They proved too costly to maintain, especially after being damaged each winter by our snowplows, and they slow emergency vehicles. For instance, each bump can slow a fire truck between five and 15 seconds. When minutes count, these minor delays add up and can make a crucial difference.

I've researched the issue and believe there may be a way forward worth Council's reconsideration. Speed bumps can be staggered in such a way as to allow a fire truck to effectively "slalom" between them down a street. Another idea is to size them to allow the width of a fire truck's axle to navigate between them down the middle of a road. I am encouraged that some of my Council colleagues feel as I do.

While York Regional Police have an obvious and important role to play, so do we. For speeding concerns, I recommend that residents participate in **Road Watch**, an effective, universal speed management and aggressive driver program.

For it to be effective, you must record the licence plate number of the offending vehicle and report it (anonymously) online. Program details can be found by typing this address into your web browser: www.markham.ca/traffic.

And lastly, if there is an area of particular concern to you and your neighbours, where dangerous and reckless driving is commonplace, please let me know. I will bring it to the attention of the police and, resources permitting, they will increase patrols.



One of 3 new speed posts on Romfield Circuit

Sustainable Neighbourhoods Small Grant Program

I am pleased to announce the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund now includes a new program called the "Sustainable Neighbourhoods Small Grant" (SNSG) program. It has been designed to fund small-scale, resident-led sustainability projects within the City of Markham.

The SNSG program supports and empowers residents to take action toward making their neighbourhoods "greener." If your project promotes environmental education and understanding while encouraging participation in sustainability, you are welcome to apply for a small grant up to a maximum of \$500 per project. **The application deadline is June 5, 2020.**

For more information visit www.markham.ca/SustainabilityGrant or contact Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management at cmarsales@markham.ca.

Thornhill now has Two "Little Free Libraries"



Little Free Library near 168 Willowbrook Road

I am pleased to announce that I secured the placement late last year of two "Little Free Libraries" for our community. Working with enthusiastic residents who also happen to be avid readers willing to host and care for them, we selected locations that will receive significant attention and interest from people of all ages: the north end of Romfield Circuit (near Starbucks) and Willowbrook Road (near Cakebread Park).

The Little Free Library is a global program facilitating the free exchange of books. If you see something you'd like to read, take it! Return it when you're finished or share it with a friend. It's up to everyone to keep these little libraries full of good reads.

More information, including a world map of "Little Free Libraries", can be found at www.littlefreelibrary.org.

Lake-To-Lake Trail MUP

I share the concerns of many residents who have complained about what they consider to be a potentially unsafe condition for pedestrians and cyclists sharing the Lake-To-Lake Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) through German Mills, especially the paved slope that meets the southside of John Street just west of Leslie Street.

At my request the city's Operations and Insurance teams have been working closely together on ways to improve this segment of the MUP to make it safer and reduce the potential risk of injury for those using it. Those measures include: directional signage, pavement markings and even widening the path at its base to increase sightlines. Those using the pathway can do their part by heeding all signs and warnings, exercising caution and being considerate toward one another.

New Development: Langstaff Gateway Update

In 2018, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications were received from Condor Properties Ltd. to build the first development block (Phase 1A) within the west Precinct area of the Langstaff Gateway community. The latter is the 47-hectare (116 acre) area of land bounded by Yonge in the west, Bayview in the east, Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in the south and Highway 407 in the north. For development planning purposes, the area is divided into three precincts: west, central and east.

The Condor applications to permit two residential towers of 50 and 45 storeys connected by a 10-storey podium at what is currently 25, 11, 9 and 5 Langstaff Road East were approved, with conditions, by Markham Council in February. These buildings are the first to be approved in what is envisioned to be a compact transit dependent community. Over the next 30 years it is expected to be home to 15,000 dwelling units, 32,000 people and at least 15,000 jobs. The developer anticipates construction to begin August 2021.

For a quick overview of what is planned for Langstaff, I encourage you to watch the "Ward 1 Talk - An Introduction to the Langstaff Gateway" video available on YouTube.