

INFORMATION SHEET

“STANDING UP FOR UNIONVILLE”

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TOPIC: **Varley Village Infill (oversized homes)**

LAST UPDATE: January 31, 2011

URA CONTACTS:

David Wakeham (david.wakeham@sympatico.ca) Committee Chair
Elaine Wilton, Committee Vice-Chair
Harry Eaglesham

BACKGROUND:

Where is Varley Village?

The area west of Main Street, Unionville, mostly surrounding Fred Varley Drive and its side streets.

What kind of Neighbourhood is it?

It consists of homes originally build in the 1960's and 1970's. Many of the residents have lived in the area for many years. It is also an area with larger lots and mature trees.

CURRENT ISSUES:

1. **New or renovated homes out of proportion:** Some homes in the area have been renovated. Some homes have been torn down and rebuilt. Some entire streets (eg. Wembley Ave.) have gone through a complete remake while others have seen a partial remake (eg Pommander Rd). Many of the renovated and newly built homes are of a scale that fits in with the neighbourhood while others are out of proportion to their neighbours. Nearby residents (eg Gainsville Ave.) are concerned about the potential invasion of their streets by so called “monster homes”.
2. **Building according to the By-laws and enforcement:** some residents feel that the existing bylaws are not being respected, that the Committee of Adjustment (C of A) is used to circumvent bylaws, that the Town does not enforce its bylaws and/or the bylaws are inadequate.
3. **Construction period impacts:** many residents in areas near construction sites have issues with noise, working hours and other such items.

URA ACTIVITY

- David Wakeham approached URA for assistance with the issue. 110 neighbourhood flyers were delivered to Gainsville Ave. and surrounding streets to invite them to a meeting on April 30, 2010 with Councilor Don Hamilton and Town staff.
- At the April 30 meeting, David gave a presentation which described impacts and proposed recommendations. Approximately 30 residents attended, expressed their extreme frustration and asked many questions.
- David presents to URA members at May 3 URA meeting.
- David, Harry and Don Hamilton met with Town staff on May 14 to get answers to residents' questions and explore options. Some of the clarifications:
 - Committee of Adjustment is supposed to only approve minor variances to existing Bylaws. However they are not answerable to Council. Appeals are only to the OMB.
 - there are regulations for construction related to noise and hours of work. Complaints can be reported to the Town Enforcement during business hours and to the police in off hours.
 - the Town does regular onsite inspections during construction
 - homes that appear large are not necessarily non-conforming with the existing bylaws
 - a special Infill Bylaw is in place in 4 areas of the Town that provides greater protection for existing home owners.
 - It may be possible to extend the notice area for C of A applications
 - **Conclusions:** an Infill Bylaw for Varley Village is the best vehicle to deal with the primary issue of inappropriately sized homes. Complaints about conformance or construction must be reported and documented.
- David presented the residents' concerns to Council's Development Services Committee (DSC) on May 25. DSC requested that staff report back in one week.
- At the June 1 DSC meeting, 2 decisions were made:
 - staff, the URA and the DSC Unionville Sub-Committee will work on a possible draft Infill Bylaw to come back to DSC in September. It would then go forward for public consultation and approval.
 - DSC approved a temporary extension of the C of A notice area for Varley Village (from 60m to 120m) until the Infill Bylaw matter is resolved.
- meetings with the Town, Unionville Sub-Committee of Council's DSC, 3 URA reps, 2 other residents, a builder, a designer and a real estate agent took place in August and September. Further activity was suspended until after the municipal election.

Meetings resumed in December and January. A draft Varley Village Bylaw was finalized on January 28. The two key elements are: limiting the size of home that can be built (varying according to lot size) and building depth. The terms of the draft Bylaw are less restrictive than other Infill Bylaws in Markham. Height provision will remain the same as the current bylaw. It had been hoped that a tree preservation element would be also possible but a way to achieve that has not been determined at this time.

NEXT STEPS

1. The Town staff will bring forward a report to DSC in March recommending a public consultation process to review the draft Infill Bylaw.
2. Public input would take place in the April/May timeframe.
3. Assuming public feedback is favourable, an Infill Bylaw would potentially be approved in the May/June timeframe.