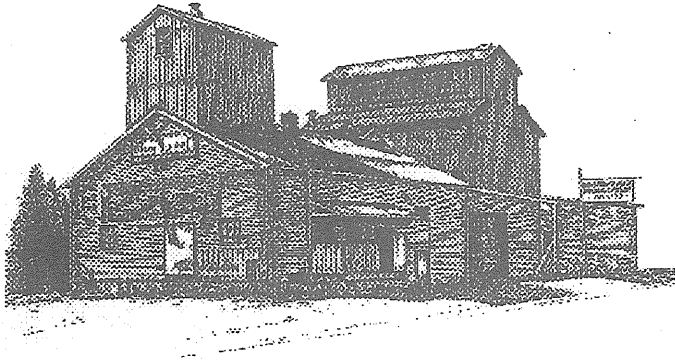


◆◆◆ Unionville Ratepayer News ◆◆◆

P.O. Box 64603, Unionville, Ontario L3R 0M9 Tel. (905) 474-9748



Stiver Brothers Elevator Complex, 9 Station Lane, circa 1916. The Town, which owns this property, recently accepted proposals from interested parties on the redevelopment of this site. After reviewing the submissions, it appears that the favoured option is a medical building. We will keep you informed as further information becomes available.

Annual Meeting

Old Unionville Train Station
Station Lane, Unionville

December 1, 1999
7:30 p.m.

Two Exciting Speakers:

Mr. Frank Scarpitti on the
amalgamation proposals.

Ms. Samantha Mason on the
Rouge Park Stewardship program.

Amalgamation - Will it help or hurt Unionville?

Just as Unionville was absorbed into the Town of Markham year ago, it appears that the Town of Markham will not be around in its present form for long. Ever since the seven governments that made up Metro Toronto were joined as one on Jan. 1, 1998, there has been growing pressure on the other GTA municipalities to look at amalgamation.

After all the protests, marches, and crying about the Mega-City, there have been no disruptions in service, no layoffs, no closure of fire halls or community centres, and the world as Toronto knows it, didn't end. And, this was accomplished with no hikes in property tax (unlike Markham, which raised taxes last year). In fact, administrative staff have been reduced, and taxes have actually been saved.

It simply doesn't make sense to have two city halls only a mile apart as Markham's and Richmond Hill's are currently. The duplication both between municipalities and between Markham and the Region is costing us all dearly every year.

The current proposals include amalgamating York Region's ten governments into anywhere from one municipality to five municipalities. Markham could be joined with Vaughan and Richmond Hill to form a southern urban municipality, it could join Richmond Hill and Stouffville to form a southeastern municipality, or it could get and lose bits and pieces of these surrounding municipalities. Any of these, or something completely different is possible.

So what will the impact on Unionville be? The impact should be very minimal. If done right, an amalgamation should actually save money, and we might even see better services delivered. And as an additional bonus, it might also stop some of the urban sprawl that currently threatens to engulf all of Markham agricultural land and green space.

Unionville's Millennium Projects

Unionville has three community organizations that are dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in Unionville while, at the same time, keeping a lid on taxes. The Unionville Ratepayers Association, as a matter of principle, decided not to submit a project for Millennium funding. It is our belief that all levels of Government should be seeking to cut taxes rather than trying to find new ways of spending them. However, since we did not want to see our lack of support resulting in loss to Unionville, we decided to support the projects proposed by both the UHS and the UBIA.

The Unionville Historical Society, selected as their project to "take back Highway 7". Their goal was to reclaim the Highway 7 portion of the new Unionville Heritage District (roughly from Esso to the BMW dealership) and create an oasis of heritage buildings at the gateway to Unionville signs at the three entry points, trees and a centre boulevard complete with trees and flowers. While the Town has decided to reject this proposal, we were advised that the Town may take on this task utilizing internal staff resources and the enforcement powers of both Heritage Markham's new architectural by-laws and the Town of Markham's existing signage by-laws.

The Unionville Business Improvement Area represents the businesses of Main Street. They have proposed the construction of a traditional Victorian-style bandstand on the site of the Town's defunct pumping station in the southwest corner of Main St. and Fred Varley Drive. The concept is that the Town provide the site and the community would provide the funding, the materials and the labour required to build the bandstand and landscape the surrounding park. The Unionville Historical Society (having lost its own project) has now thrown its support behind the BIA's project. Your directors have therefore decided to provide our association's approval to this project thereby making support from all three Unionville community organizations unanimous. If interested in getting involved, please contact Richard Talbot at 477-8931.

Rouge River Setback, Upset

For some years, organizations that value the environmental benefits of the Rouge River and its fragile ecosystem have fought to extend the setback from the stable bank from 10 metres to 30 metres that developers are allowed to build on.

Since the proclamation of the Rouge Park, the need for a wider corridor to allow safe migration of wild life, and for the protection of the flora and fauna has been a goal supported by the Rouge Park, "Save the Rouge System" and many Ratepayer groups.

This proposal came up for a final vote in October before the Rouge Alliance, the park's management board. The development industry opposed the proposal stating that the freeing up of land on the banks of the Rouge River and its tributaries would affect them adversely.

David Tsubouchi, Markham's MPP, and his then cabinet colleague Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Gilchrist both declared their support for the increased setback. However with the votes of Markham's Mayor Don Cousens, Councillors Randy Barber and other northern municipalities, the proposal was defeated.

The Development Industry had called for a scientific approach and suggestions that the 30-metre proposal would be indefensible before the OMB.

Toronto Councilor Bas Balkisson an Alliance member responded that "Victory will go to the consultants with the deepest pockets, and in many cases the communities won't have the resources to launch independent scientific studies. Guess what? We'll all be left looking at the developer's consultants report."

Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Membership:

Regular - \$10 Supporting - \$20

Contribution to Heritage Fund: \$ _____

P.O. Box 64603, Unionville, Ontario L3R 0M9

Meet Your Executive

Officers:

Alan Graf - President
Fred Clark - Vice-President
John Paloc - Past President
David Richards - Treasurer

Directors:

Tom Beck
Neville Cohen
Mary Lawlor
Jeannie Reingold
Richard Talbot, C.D.

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