

# Royal Road residents get partial exemption from new Stable Neighbourhood rules

**By Brock Weir**

Residents of Royal

Road living between Edward Street and Cameron Avenue will be exempt from new rules governing Aurora's Stable Neighbourhoods.

The exemption was made

at last week's Council meeting, which saw a series of changes made to the kinds of new builds that will be allowed in Regency Acres, Aurora Heights, and the community surrounding Town Park.

Requests for the

exemption came at the previous week's General Committee meeting where resident Sina Daniell made her case.

Due to the unusually

wide properties of the nineteen lots in question, this section of the neighbourhood was an anomaly, she said, and should be looked at separately.

“Our unique and

special pocket of Royal Road” consists of 19 homes, all with consecutive lot frontages of 78, 80, 90 and up to 100 feet,” said Ms. Daniell. “I am asking to be exempted from the proposed zoning bylaw changes as we are the outliers. We will not have the vertical massing issues for the very simple reasons that all of the 19 consecutive lots have large lot frontages. The proposed unprecedented and unreasonable changes to our pocket were either an oversight or a mistake which needs to be corrected immediately. We do not have issues and will never have issues based on the current zoning bylaw, which bylaw we relied upon when purchasing our large frontage homes.

“This proposed zoning

bylaw is capping our maximum footprint to 2,540 square feet, inclusive of garage. A reasonable person cannot argue that the maximum footprint on two completely different lot frontages be exactly the same. All of the homes in our pocket have 50 ? 100 per cent wider lot frontages and are not consistent with the other lots in the study. By reducing the coverage and also capping it, is in fact reducing our coverage by 35 per cent, compared to what we are allowed today. In addition, you are taking away our rights to a three-car garage on such large frontages. Where else in the GTA are residents with comparable lot frontages prohibited from having a three-car garage? I could not find one. This is extreme and excessive and takes away our rights and enjoyment of our properties. It also takes away the possibility of building a decent-sized bungalow, which is discriminatory.”

Also speaking in

favour of an exemption was fellow Royal Road resident Neil Asselin, who said although he lives on the other side of Royal Road, he saw Ms. Daniell's

concerns as an example on how the Stable Neighbourhood Study before Council  
failed to capture the nuance of the Town Park neighbourhood [and] the  
different architectural styles.

Council members did  
not formally pass a resolution addressing the Royal Road residents' concerns at  
the Committee level, but it proved a factor the following week when the new  
rules were up for final ratification.

The motion to exempt  
the specified section of Royal Road was made by Councillor Sandra Humfries, who  
agreed the area was an unusual situation.

There are a number of  
lots that aren't quite similar in terms of the large, large size, she said.  
They should be removed from the area.

Councillor Humfries  
echoed the comments made by Mayor Tom Mrakas last week where he said he was  
worried an exemption might lead to exceptionally large homes in the area, but  
said the exemption fit in this case.

I understand there  
might be a need on this street and I can't disagree, but Councillor Thompson  
made a recommendation last week to have a more comprehensive study after all  
this [to look at possible exemptions] and just have a more comprehensive  
examination of all the neighbourhoods, said Councillor Harold Kim, adding if  
Royal Road was used as a benchmark he was not in favour of the amendment  
because there was no rush in this situation.

I think we can take a  
little bit of time [for] a more detailed examination to see if there are other  
streets that might require an exemption, he concluded.

While Council pushed  
through the exemption for Royal Road, they opted to go down this path of  
waiting for a more comprehensive evaluation when faced with a similar request  
for homes on Metcalfe Street.

Homeowners on Metcalfe  
Street living close to the GO Station were asking for an exemption of their  
own, said Councillor Humfries, as their proximity to both the GO Station and  
nearby industry put them just outside of what would be considered a stable  
neighbourhood.

David Waters, Planner  
for the Town of Aurora, said there was some validity to removing the  
properties from the Stable Neighbourhoods study, but said the properties in  
question are being examined by the Region of York as part of their MTSA (Major  
Transit Station Area) study and there might be more questions down the road.

?It is important to wait and see what happens with the Regional Planning or the MTSA to see where the boundary is and if they include it,? said Mr. Waters. ?At this point, they can decide whether they move forward or not with any kind of redevelopment scenario.?