

Councillor offers 'the facts and nothing but the facts' on stable neighbourhoods

On March 27 at 7 p.m., the seventh meeting on protecting mature residential areas will be held. Residents have been fighting long and hard, enduring frustration, disappointment and quality of life changes to their neighbourhoods.

Fact: The policies in our current Official Plan are already protective. The new very large homes are not allowed.

Fact: Aurora is required, under the planning act, to change zoning bylaws for stable neighbourhoods to conform to our Official Plan.

Fact: Although individual property values has become a political issue that has distracted some, the reality is that creating good planning policy, that is best for the community as a whole, will continuously enhance property values and our status as a desirable place to live.

Official Plans direct how a community must grow.

The Provincial Planning Act, 1997, states that Municipal Councils are under the obligation to update their Official Plans every 5 years. This is to ensure compliance and consistency with Provincial Plans and Policies. Aurora's updated OP was approved by the Province, Region and passed by Aurora in 2012.

'The process to review and update this Plan was comprehensive.' The resulting Plan is of great importance because it evaluates and determines the growth that will be best for Aurora. It establishes rules and tools for Staff and Council to evaluate if developers' proposals are in the best interest of the community.

Aurora's Official Plan: One of the Fundamental Principles is Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods. 'Aurora's existing neighbourhoods...are not only a defining element of Aurora's character and urban structure, but also a tremendous asset and attractor for new residents and investment interests. The Plan seeks to ensure that the stability and vibrancy of these existing neighbourhoods is protected from the negative impacts of potential incompatible development and growth pressures. Any infill that occurs must be compatible with the established community character.'

Section 8 'Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods: The Intent is to have these residential areas 'protected from incompatible forms of development and, at the same time permit them to evolve

and be enhanced over time.?

?All new development shall be compatible with its surrounding context.?

The first Development Policy says: ?New development and site alteration abutting existing residential development shall be sympathetic to the form and character of the existing development and shall be compatible with regard to the building scale and urban design.?

Design Policies direct that ?all new development shall respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area, with particular attention to?height and scale of nearby residential properties.?

It was said by some that the meaning of ?compatible? was not clear enough.

Compatible, as defined in our OP ?Refers to that development that may not necessarily be the same or similar to the existing buildings in the vicinity, but, nonetheless enhances an

established community...without causing any undue adverse impact on surrounding properties.?

The meaning seems pretty clear to me. The intent is certainly clear.

Residents have been required to work and fight for something that should have just happened. According to The Planning Act and Aurora's OP, I understand their discouragement.

My sincere apology. I hope that the results of the Planning Meeting on March 27 will finally put things right.

Councillor Wendy GaertnerAurora