

Protecting residents in older neighbourhoods?

Councils

have tried to protect older neighbourhoods in past years and failed. The difference this time is that Aurora has new Planning Policy in place since 2012 in our Official Plan (OP). It includes many protective Fundamental Principles and Development Policies.

The Ontario Planning Act mandates Councils to review all zoning by-laws for compliance with OP updates.

Although Aurora did a Comprehensive Review, the Zoning By-laws for our older Stable Neighbourhoods were never included.

I brought this to Council's attention in October 2017. I thought we could correct this oversight quickly and easily before the new building season arrived. We had so many residents dismayed by the negative effects of the new very large homes. Their quality of life, including loss of privacy, sunlight, air flow, streetscape and mature trees, was at risk.

For over 18 months and 10 Meetings so many residents came to Council to keep asking for help. (For two of these Meetings residents very opposed to change came forward).

What protection did residents ask for?

Reduce the allowed lot coverage to less than 35% so house size will be more in keeping with existing homes. Reduce allowed height so new homes will not tower over them and limit light and privacy. This is clearly in keeping with OP policies in Section 8. All new development within the Stable Neighbourhoods' designation shall respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area, with particular attention to the following elements: the building type of nearby residential properties, the heights and scale of nearby residential properties, the setback of buildings from the street.

What did residents get? None of the protections they pleaded for.

What did Aurora lose? The character of mature neighbourhoods that make Aurora unique, less choice for residents who want to buy smaller homes; and a decrease in affordable rental housing so lacking in our community.

I could not vote for zoning changes that will not benefit the majority of my residents in these neighbourhoods and the wider Aurora community.

Councillor Wendy GaertnerAurora