

Raise your voice to protect stable neighbourhoods

I attended a Council meeting on October 24 regarding the homes that are being bought in the older neighbourhoods of Aurora and torn down and then replaced with huge homes that do not fit into the rest of the landscape.

I am concerned for the future of older neighbourhoods in Aurora if we do not create a framework for acceptable building practices now to maintain the character and aesthetics of where we live.

We moved to our current home over nine years ago. We specifically chose our neighbourhood because of the large trees, large lots and smaller homes that are, on average, 1.5 storeys tall. Our home is back split and we can easily live here until our need for permanent care in a retirement home. We love the privacy our property allows us, yet the convenience of living in Town. We do not want our neighbours' homes towering over our backyard and crowding as close as possible to our lot lines, encroaching on our privacy.

Everywhere I look it seems these smaller homes are being torn down and replaced with huge 2.5 ? 3 storey homes that crowd as close as possible to the lot lines. There are some great examples of this on Child Drive, Wells Street, Fairway Drive and Seaton Drive. These homes that are being built can be seen from blocks away; they do not fit into their surrounding area. They block airflow and sunlight to their neighbours who enjoyed these things before these new homes were built.

I am not adverse to the current homes being replaced with new homes, but I do believe that there should be tighter restrictions with regard to height and square footage. They should also not be able to remove all of the large trees on the lot that make our neighbourhood so enjoyable. The new homes should be designed to respect the character of the existing neighbourhood and the residents who currently reside there.

I am tired of being told 'It is happening everywhere,' or 'that is the price of progress,' etc. We can make a difference, we can make ourselves heard. Sometimes we need to stop, take a step back and look at the whole picture. If people want large houses, they are out there. Please feel free to go buy one in a neighbourhood that is full of those houses. Don't destroy the special qualities of my neighbourhood by buying a home, tearing it down, and replacing it with a monstrosity that is misplaced and not wanted.

How can we help make this happen? Contact a Town Councillor and let them know your concerns, talk to them. We voted them into Council to be our voice and to help us run our community. Write letters to the paper and copy these letters to the Council members. All of their contact information is on the Town website.

I am sure you've heard the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Well, join your voice to ours and soon we will have a choir and change will happen.

I would like to thank Councillor Wendy Gaertner for bringing the concerns of Aurora citizens to the attention of Town Council and ensuring that we are heard.

We need our Town Council and the Planning Department to talk to each other and work together. Come up with a plan that keeps the residents happy and still generates the wealth that seems to drive the concerns in Town. This needs to happen sooner rather than later before we lose the neighbourhoods that make Aurora such a great place to live.

Aurora is growing in leaps and bounds and with good reason; we're an amazing community and people want to live here. We were called 'The Beaches of the North' in a magazine article I read last year. Let's try to keep Aurora an amazing place to raise families and let's protect our older neighbourhoods.

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