

York worst in GTA for building taxes: association

LISA QUEEN
Metroland Staff

The exorbitant cost of constructing homes in York Region is under attack from the new president of the Greater Toron-

to Home Builders' Association.

While Mary Lawson is warning municipal politicians in the GTA not to jack up taxes and fees on new homes in their communities, she's most irate about proposed increases in York.

Taxes now account for up to 20 per cent of the price of a new home, depending on the municipality. Lawson accused York's municipalities of being the worst of the bunch.

Pointing to a new study prepared for her association, Lawson said fees on a typical single-family home add up to more than \$33,000 in Richmond Hill, "home of the 54 per cent salary increase for local politicians."

"The most excessive charges in the GTA can be found in York Region where Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan rank one, two and three in absolute and percentage terms."

But Markham Mayor Don Cousens and Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor don't have sympathy for the planning industry. Pass on Costs

They argue new development should pay for itself, rather than have existing residents pick up the tab.

"Stop screaming and crying. If they don't want to pay them, don't build up here," Cousens said.

"We're not going to permit growth unless we have the money to pay for the infrastructure. That's the cost of doing business in York Region."

Taylor said municipalities base building permit fees and development charges on the cost of processing applications and providing services to new residents.

Builders pass those costs on to the new homebuyer, he added.

But Lawson accused municipal politicians of sneaking unjustifiable costs into their fee structures.

"Our concern is it's possible to hide costs in the package. We do have a huge concern."

Cousens challenged the association to check municipalities' books before making its accusations.

According to the association, the industry faces \$17,723 in fees and taxes to build a single-family home in Aurora, \$23,666 in Markham, \$16,952 in Newmarket, \$32,231 in Richmond Hill and \$19,539 in Vaughan.

Meanwhile, Richmond Hill hopes to increase its building permit fees by 20 per cent, while York Region proposes boosting its development charges \$1,500 on each new home to help pay for \$3 billion in new infrastructure needed over the next two decades.

Lawson promised builders would pass any savings resulting from reduced taxes directly on to homebuyers. "The market will dictate it. We would have to give it back."

Moratorium on Development
But Cousens is skeptical. "I'd like to believe it."

He suggested municipalities would be prepared to place a moratorium on development if development charges and fees were reduced.

Lawson said the public and councillors are under the misconception builders are making huge profits now that the housing industry is healthy.

But while sales are up, Lawson insisted builders are not pocketing fists full of cash.

"Profits are getting smaller and smaller and smaller. Builders are not making any money."

In addition to increasing land prices, builders have to cope with homebuyers who are demanding more amenities and customized orders.

But Lawson dismissed suggestions builders should construct homes elsewhere if doing business in the GTA is too expensive.

She pointed out land in other communities isn't serviced with water and sewer pipes.

Also, builders have ties to their communities, she said.

"Builders are people, too."



TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

NOTICE TO CLOSE, STOP UP AND CONVEY TURNING CIRCLES

TAKE NOTICE THAT The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville intends to pass a by-law to close, stop up and convey the portions of the turning circles on William Andrew Avenue, more particularly designated as Parts 1, 2, 4 and 7, on Registered Plan 65R-18500, in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE THAT The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville intends to pass a by-law to close and stop up the portions of the turning circle on William Andrew Avenue, more particularly designated as Parts 3 and 10, on Registered Plan 65R-18500, in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.


AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall, at the hour of 7:00 p.m., Monday, March 16th, 1998, at Latham Hall, 8 Park Drive, Stouffville, hear any person who claims that he/she will be adversely affected by the by-law and applies to be heard.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to a publishing error, the date of the council meeting has been rescheduled from Monday, February 16, 1998 to Monday, March 16, 1998.

DATED at the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville this 20th day of January, 1998

Mrs. Michele Kennedy, Town Clerk
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
19 Civic Avenue
Box 419
Stouffville, Ontario
L4A 7Z6

Published a first time the 10th day of February, 1998.




Come and Join us for our
60th Anniversary Celebration
for the
LIONS CLUB of STOUFFVILLE
February 28th, 1998
MARKHAM FAIRGROUNDS

Dinner and Dance
\$25.00 per person

Social 6:30pm
& Dinner 7:15pm
Everyone Welcome!!

For tickets call 640-5554, 642-2545 or 640-2847
Congratulations Lions for 60 years of Community Service





Stouffville District Secondary School
183 Bramble Crescent,
Stouffville, Ont. L4A 7Z1
(905) 640-1433 Facsimile (905) 640-1475



UPCOMING SIGNIFICANT DATES

Tuesday, February 17 - Parent/Teacher Liason Group
7:30 p.m.
(All parents are welcome. Grade 8 parents in particular)

TOPIC "Post Secondary Alternatives"

GUESTS - Penny Bissett - University
- Robin Gardner - College
- Jeanne Stefan - Apprenticeship

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23
Report Cards Issued

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26
Parent's Night (Grade 9 - OAC)

MONDAY, MARCH 2
Course Selection Day

TUESDAY, MARCH 3
School Council, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13-20
March Break

You are invited to a
Meeting
"Horse Country Canada"
Whitchurch-Stouffville



A meeting will be held to discuss opportunities to promote the horse industry of Whitchurch-Stouffville

All Owners and Operators Welcome
(Bring your brochures)

Where: Maples of Ballantrae Highway 48 (North of Bloomington)

When: Thursday, February 12th, 1998 7-9 p.m.

For more information contact:
Eric Lismanis 905/640-7855
Judy Kennedy 905/642-1161
Mavis McCullum 905/473-3445

Supply teachers secure raise

Supply teachers at York Region's Catholic school board have secured a small pay increase after ratifying a new two-year contract last month.

The highlight of the contract for the York Occasional Teachers' Local of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association includes a \$15-a-day rate hike.

Effective Jan. 1, the teachers will earn \$133 a day, which represents a return to the pre-Social Contract rate. Next January, the salary jumps an extra \$5 to \$138 a day.

Other contract amendments affect leaves without pay, occasional teacher list eligibility and long-term occasional positions. This is the second contract ratified with the local unit, which was certified two years ago as the bargaining agent for the occasional teachers.