

Board requires Markham students to take public transit to school in Richmond Hill

Lack of busing angers parents

BY CAROLINE GRECH
Staff Writer

Denis Belec is upset his daughter is not getting a ride to high school.

The Markham father is not alone, as a group of Markham parents have started petitions demanding transportation for their children, who, despite living in Markham, have to attend school in Richmond Hill.

His daughter, Andrea, attended high school at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Secondary School in Markham, but for Grade 10, was told she would have to go to Richmond Green Secondary School.

"We had no choice. We were told she has to go to the Richmond Hill school," Mr. Belec said.

"They didn't even tell us that we wouldn't get a bus for our children

until two days before school started."

As the Belecs live more than 4.8 kilometres away from the Richmond Hill high school, their daughter should be bused, according to the school board's policy.

While there is York Region Transit service in their neighbourhood, Mr. Belec doesn't believe it is a practical strategy.

Following the bus route his daughter Andrea is designated to take to school, Mr. Belec was unimpressed.

"It was a fiasco. The kids were late to school," he said.

The Markham father is not alone in his concern over the lack of transportation.

A few parents have started petitions to get busing for their children.

Markham resident Fanny Choi,

'They didn't even tell us that we wouldn't get a bus for our children until two days before school started.'

Denis Belec
student's father

who has a daughter in Grade 9, is among them.

So far, 51 parents have signed the petition.

Ms Choi turned to the petition after she became frustrated by the lack of answers she was getting from the school board.

"We want to know why we are not getting busing," Ms Choi said.

For now, Ms Choi and other par-

ents in the same predicament are car pooling their children to school.

York Region District School Board's policy states secondary students aren't eligible to ride a school bus if they live within 3.2 kilometres of the nearest high school where public transit is not available and within 4.8 kilometres where public transit exists.

Discussions are continuing between parents and the board about the situation, board spokesperson Ross Virgo said, arguing all affected parents are within the 4.8 kilometre distance.

A drive by a York Region Newspaper Group reporter measured the distance from Ms Choi's home to the school at just more than five kilometres.

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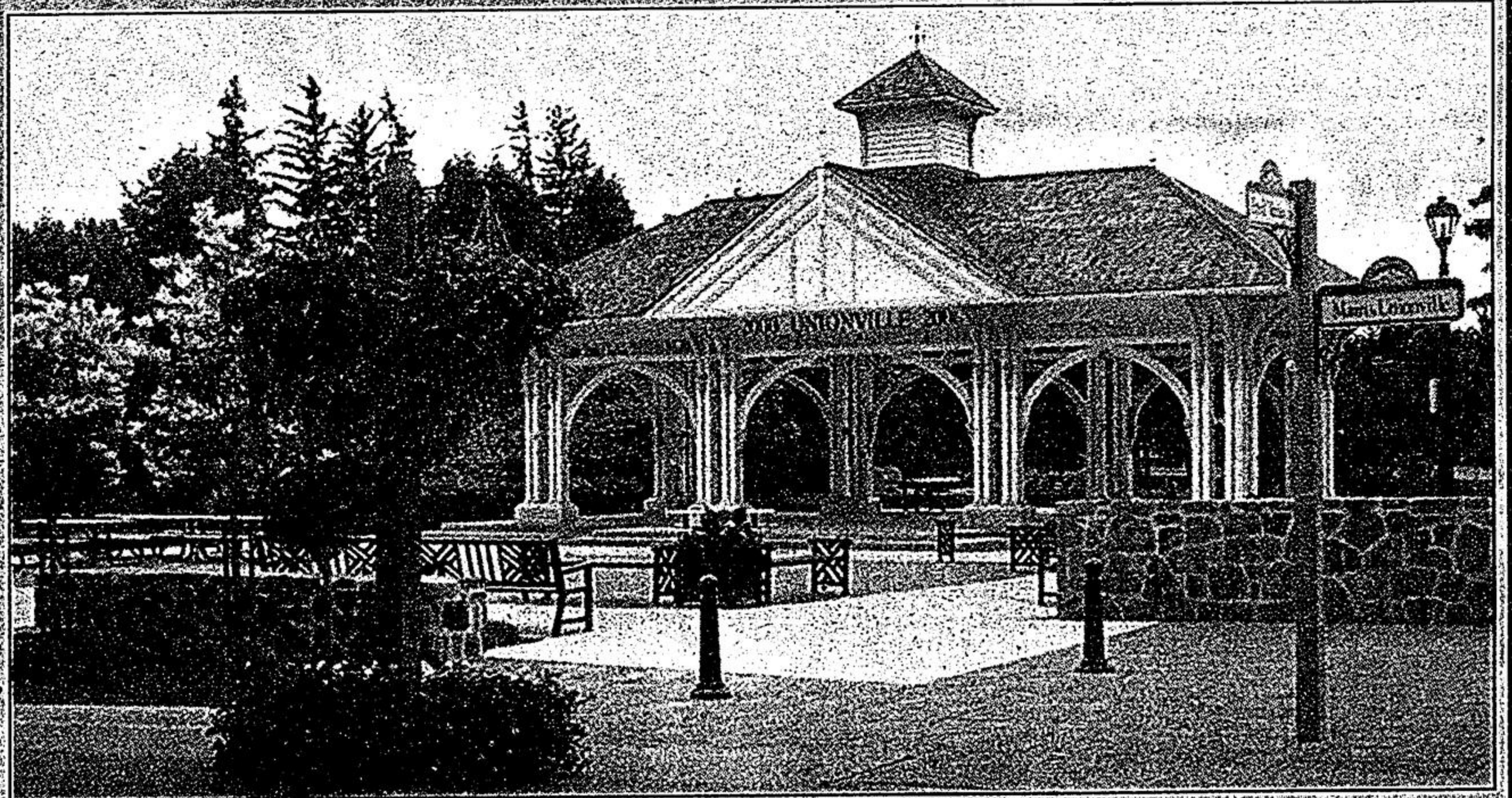
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