

Home sales hurt by weather

BY DAVID FLEISCHER
Staff Writer

While the GTA's real estate market continues to slow after a record-setting 2007, some York neighbourhoods are bucking the trend.

There were 6,015 resale home transactions in February, down 11 per cent from last year's numbers, according to the Toronto Real Estate Board.

While Toronto dropped 14 per cent, the 905 areas dropped only 9 per cent.

Some areas even went up, with the northern section of Richmond Hill growing 19 per cent, thanks to strong detached home sales.

Markham was the most active district in the region, with 162 homes changing hands last month.

Unionville recorded 10 sales in January and February, seven of them detached homes averaging \$623,971. Condominiums constituted the other

three sales.

The average price of a home in the GTA has risen to \$382,048, up 4 per cent from February 2007.

In York Region, the number is even higher at \$409,155.

A snowy winter has been one factor slowing the market in what is typically a less active time of year and it is too early to worry about any kind of market slowdown, according to the board's president.

"Generally, properties that are listed are selling fairly quickly and with a list to sale price ratio of 99 per cent, for the most part, sellers are realizing their asking price," board president Maureen O'Neill said.

"All economic indicators are in place for an active year in the GTA and, as the weather improves, sales are expected to increase as well," she said.

Getting married in the islands? Get hitched here first: town

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Travelling to another country to get married? Not sure whether the marriage certificate you're getting is recognized in Canada?

There is a way to take that worry out of your nuptials.

With an eye on recent reports of couples travelling to warm climes for a wedding and coming home with fake marriage certificates, Whitchurch-Stouffville deputy clerk Andrew Brouwer has an answer.

He advises couples to get married first before heading off to a more spiritual ceremony in a warm vacation spot.

And the town council chambers is one such place in which to get married.

The town has offered civil marriages for almost a year.

Many of the couples getting married in the council chambers are tying the knot the second time around.

► Go to townofws.com and click on the heading Resident Services for more information.

Some of them are heading off to a 'destination' wedding in another country, Colleen Clarke, the town's licensing officer said.

The town's civil marriage ceremony costs \$250.

Three different scripts are offered and couples often make some changes to the script they choose.

Some couples have come with two witnesses while others have had parties of 30 or more.

The maximum number of people accommodated at the town offices is 80, Ms Clarke said.

You have the option of bringing your own flowers and providing your own music for the ceremony.

The non-religious ceremony is performed by authorized town staff.

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