

OPINION



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Editorial

Pickering Airport plans not all good news for neighbours

ISSUE

Devastated area on Stouffville's doorstep will finally get airport – if announcement is for real

For more than 40 years, the Pickering airport lands have stood on Stouffville's eastern doorstep.

They've sat decaying for the most part as federal governments wrestled with on-again, off-again plans for an international airport in the Durham Region community right next door to you.

Families have long since moved on, their farms and homes – many of them now demolished – expropriated.

Many moved to Whitchurch-Stouffville back in the day.

Now the airport is a go again, with the announcement Tuesday of a new footprint for the future facility. Government officials unveiled a new land use plan for the 18,600 acres of federal lands.

Jim Flaherty, Whitby Oshawa MP, finance minister and minister responsible for the GTA, may have made the understatement of the year when he said, "These lands have created some uncertainty in Durham Region and beyond."

You think, Mr. Flaherty? And the Toronto Maple Leafs are in a minor Stanley Cup drought, too.

Assuming this plan comes to fruition, the removal of

that uncertainty is the best thing about this week's airport announcement.

The plan includes the transfer of 5,000 acres of the west portion of the lands to the new Rouge National Urban Park, with the rest dedicated to a future airport and urban and industrial development.

That's good news. So is the potential for jobs and spin-off industry in our area and the reduction in ground gridlock a second international airport could provide.

What may not be positive for Whitchurch-Stouffville residents is the long-debated effect planned runway approaches will have on Stouffville, Mus-selman's Lake and Ballantrae residents.

Mr. Flaherty can't see an airport opening for at least 15 years, including a decade of construction and several years of study and more debate.

Hopefully, that will be enough time for local politicians to minimize the environmental impact an airport will have on our community.

That's assuming this isn't just another in a string of false starts, Mr. Flaherty.

Forty years is too long for any community to be put on the shelf.

BOTTOM LINE: Stouffville residents deserve spin-off jobs, environmental protection

This is debatable

WEIGH IN ON THE DISCUSSION ... e-mail your comments to jmason@yrmg.com

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Flippers could be coming to your neighbourhood next

A new wave of builders/flippers has hit Stouffville.

City builders are coming to town buying older homes on properties in well-established, mature, single family dwellings neighbourhoods, knocking them down and flipping them into multi-family dwellings. It is coming to a neighbourhood near you unless we do something about it. Their intent, you ask? It's profit.

These savvy builders are appealing to the town and asking for an amendment to the present zoning bylaw, allowing, in our community's case, to tear down a small single dwelling and build a five-unit townhouse development.

These five townhouses are being placed on a 100-foot wide lot, less than four feet from the fence line, three storeys high and five driveways backing on to the already congested Tenth Line.

This proposal does not follow the town's strategic plan of having an interior road or a secondary lane access, just as you see on the east side of Tenth Line in the new development.

Parking will be a huge problem, causing an increased safety and traffic congestion issue less than 150 feet from the Hoover Park Drive roundabout.

This proposal is not fitting in this com-

munity and it will have a negative impact on our property values, there are wetland issues, grading issues, mature trees established all along this property and privacy concerns for existing residents.

Townhouse development should be kept to new development that follows the town's strategic plan and not to any property owner who looks to profit at the expense of the long-time residents of Stouffville.

There is a second council meeting to address this proposal June 18 at 3 p.m. If this amendment is passed, it will set precedent in our community, allow the next flipper/builder to change the zoning from a single residential zoning to a multi-residential zoning. Keep in mind, this could allow duplexes etc. right next door to you.

Our neighbourhood has created a petition and there is a link below for people to access. Pay very close attention to this application to amend this by law as it may not be in your neighbourhood today, but if it passes, it sets precedence and it could be in your neighbourhood tomorrow.

Petition: <http://tinyurl.com/SaveSingleDwellings>

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/StopSquishingStouffville>

Town of Whitchurch Stouffville proposals of bylaws: <http://tinyurl.com/PublicMeetingApril23>

KELLY TIMEWELL
STOUFFVILLE

Don't mess with our heritage – or name

Time to revisit our hyphenated name, Whitchurch-Stouffville, letter to the editor by Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, June 6.

I thought we wanted to be known as the country above the city.

I see it as Whitchurch being the country part of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The community of Stouffville takes up just one small corner of the whole Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The majority of the hamlets of Whitchurch-Stouffville seem to be thriving.

Even so, we don't have the sports facilities, pools or other advantages of the community of Stouffville.

My husband was born in Whitchurch on the same property where we now live in 1923 and I have lived here

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or any others?
E-mail jmason@yrmg.com

for 60 years. Our roots are firmly planted.

Maybe Newmarket or Aurora would welcome us. After all, I'm 15 minutes from either town.

My children, grandchildren and even my great grandchildren attended Whitchurch Highlands Public School.

In their youth, they played in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association.

It's bad enough my address, phone number and postal code are all Newmarket

I love my area of

Whitchurch-Stouffville and hopefully you'll have to wait till all we oldtimers are gone before you start messing with our heritage and name.

In heritage we stand.

BERNICE PRESTON
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Give Rob Ford a break

Re: Want a Rob Fordesque mayor? Sit back and enjoy the show, column by Jim Mason, June 13.

After reading this column, I can tell that Mr. Mason cast his vote to the left on election day.

Jim, what newspaper do you have delivered to your front door? Could you be reading the Toronto Star exclusively?

Give Rob Ford a break until he is proven guilty of a crime.

THOMAS SMARDENKAS
STOUFFVILLE