

OPINION



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LETTERS POLICY

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York Region developer earned OMB decision

ISSUE

Ontario Municipal Board sides with Marianneville in Glenway battle.

If you were surprised by the Ontario Municipal Board's decision to side with the developer in the Newmarket Glenway battle, you shouldn't have been.

Many are arguing the OMB just sides with developers, but they don't understand the role of the provincially appointed appeals body.

The OMB is not in the back pocket of developers. It is not receiving kickbacks to support developer agendas.

And it doesn't always back developers.

For instance, in January, the OMB ruled against a developer's appeal to redesignate land for an outdoor banquet facility in King Township.

Last November, the OMB supported a Vaughan council decision to maintain its ward boundaries.

The OMB, at its core, is an unbiased group that looks at development proposals without prejudice.

Its decisions are based on evidence presented at a hearing, relevant law, provincial policies and the principles of good planning.

The OMB is a democratic system and has been since it was created by the province as the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board in 1906.

In the most recent Glenway case, which the town entered at the urging of neighbour-

ing residents who opposed the planned addition of 730 homes to the former golf course property, OMB chairperson Susan Schiller ruled that despite the fact the property was not pegged for development in the town's official plan, Marianneville Developments is permitted to build on it.

If the town was serious about preserving the 146-acre site, located south of Davis Drive West, between Yonge and Bathurst streets, it missed several opportunities to do so and did not take any steps to recover the Glenway land and provide long-term protection for it as public open space, Ms Schiller ruled.

As well, the province's growth plan, at no point, suggests the only place intensification can occur is within a designated intensification area, she added.

So, the simple fact in this case is the developer came out on top because it had the stronger case.

In the King Township and Vaughan cases, the respective municipalities put forth the more compelling arguments based on planning, rules and principles.

That's why they won. That's not going to make Glenway residents happy and it certainly won't change the minds of anti-OMB crusaders throughout the region, but it's what counts.

BOTTOM LINE: Best argument comes away with decisions during OMB fights.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Cellphone tower crowd misrepresented at meeting

Re: Cell tower dispute rages on ahead of public meeting, March 27.

Your story says, "Council chambers were full of people opposing a cell tower on St. John's Sideroad" in 2011.

Those of us who were there have often wondered why, when there seemed to only be four people present who opposed the

tower, it didn't go through.

The rest were there in support, but other than getting up and speaking didn't know how council would know where we stand.

One person in opposition, after speaking at the mic, sat down and promptly made a phone call. Now I wonder how many other times we were misrepresented due to council not knowing how the crowd felt.

DIANE WARD

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Roads aren't safe

Every night lately on the TV news, they have a segment on the condition of the roads in Toronto, the numerous potholes and the damage incurred by motorists to their cars.

Well, Toronto residents, if you drive up to Stouffville you will encounter roads that make yours seem good.

They are so badly damaged they no longer can be considered roads. These streets are Blake, Burkholder, O'Brien and Russell, along with many others, including Main from Park Drive to Tenth Line.

However, Toronto, if you wish to train your road staff on repairing potholes, you could use our roads as a training ground.

During the past 20 years they have been patched, re-patched and re-patched and as a result we do not have

any roads, just patches.

Each year we are told that they will be paved — the town even had consultants meet with the residents to show us the improvements that will take place — but it just never happens and the consultants just disappear like the funding that has been allocated in the past for road re-construction.

I talked to Councillor Rob Hargrave about this major problem and nothing ever happens. Year after year, we are told the town has no funding available.

But they do seem to have funding for everything else like a \$1-million ball diamond in Memorial Park.

The last conversation I had with Councillor Hargrave, he advised that 2015 will be the year the roads may be paved. We have all heard this fairy tale before.

In the interest of safety, I requested that signs be post-

ed reading "Caution Rough Roads-Reduce Speed" to prevent damage to vehicles and others that use these streets.

Councillor Hargrave advised they did not favour signs because it is not good for the town's image. But roads full of potholes are all right? In other words, forget safety.

I challenge any member of council to drive on these streets and witness the condition first hand. These are not safe streets and it is requested that council allocate funding to re-pave these roads.

The only councillor that really understood and implemented a re-construction program for roads was the late Harry Bowes and it has long been forgotten by Mayor Wayne Emmerson and this council.

B.MILLSIP
STOUFFVILLE



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