

GARA News

The Next Four Years

GARA proudly co-hosted the first 2014 All Candidates meeting in Markham on September 18 at Henderson Avenue Public School. We had 26 candidates and over 300 residents in attendance. On October 27, Markham voted in its Mayor, Ward 1 Thornhill and Regional Councillors along with School Board Trustees to serve the community for the next four years. Each successful candidate had their own platform that was embraced by the community. It is now up to residents to work with these politicians to see their campaign promises come to fruition.

To this end, GARA is quickly moving forward post election, enlisting the direct involvement of politicians to ensure our community is a top priority. We continue to drive the community agenda of building community services and safety into development plans. The Ward 1 Thornhill Councillor, our four Regional Councillors and the Mayor are directly responsible for our area. They have been very open to GARA suggestions in the past, however, some specific community issues related to traffic and new amenities need some timeline management because little physical evidence of plans in place. Certainly, government moves slowly, particularly during elections, but GARA expects some forward momentum in the months to come. Stay tuned! Ricardo Mashregi, GARA Chair.



www.thornhillgara.com

GARA Executive 2013-2014

Chair: Ricardo Mashregi

Volunteer Coordinaor: Peter Bernotas

Past Chair: Marilyn Ginsburg

Membership & Special Events: Rhonda Duma

Treasurer: Majda Ambrozic

Members at Large: Dale Stedman & Paul Kelly

Secretary: Loreena Pattanaik

Webmaster/Editor: Corie Bonnaffon

Committee of Adjustments: Tarun Dewan **Youth Representitive:** Vincent Mak

GARA Annual General Meeting

Join us for an important presentation on Emergency Planning. Learn what you can do to keep your household safe. Floods? Ice storms? What next? What you need to know.

This will be immediately followed by an update on many of the issues facing us including neighbourhood traffic and promised park improvements.

There will also be a review of our constitution and the election of our executives for the coming year.

Everyone is invited and is more than welcome to participate. Come and bring your neighbours. This is a great opportunity to join GARA or renew your membership. Together we can accomplish a great deal.

Thursday November 20, 7:30pm in the Gym at Henderson School

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Cyber Bullying In Markham Must Stop

Do you know what cyber bullying is? It takes many forms but basically involves sending intimidating emails threatening a person's safety or reputation.

Cyber bullying happens every day in the community and affects children and adults alike. The activity is illegal, particularly when threats are to one's reputation, one's physical or financial well-being, or of a law suit and the only purpose is to intimidate.

Cyber-bullying may be direct or covert. Resident association members of Thornhill Ward 1 (previously Ward 1 and 2) have received highly critical and condescending emails on community issues. Hard to believe in the context of community politics, but true! Worse, some of these posts called 'spoofing emails' attempt to hide the senders true identity, to us a cowardly way to send a message. This hasn't happened recently to members of GARA but it has happened to other ratepayer associations in Thornhill, so it is relevant to us all.

Sadly, as a result of cyber-bullying, some previously active residents have stopped participating in the discussion of community issues. All citizens of Markham have the right to participate in the issues of their community and city without fear of intimidation, retribution, or bullying. Citizen participation is the very foundation of democracy.



While we are all aware of the need to protect our children from cyber-bullies, we are equally committed to protecting our fellow residents and community organizations. Honest and open debate of issues is always welcome. Underhanded, cowardly e-mails and anonymous messages left on web sites or Facebook should be taken seriously and reported to the police where appropriate.

It is up to all of us to take bullying seriously, in all its forms. If you see it, speak up and stop it. If it's happening to you, report it to the authorities.

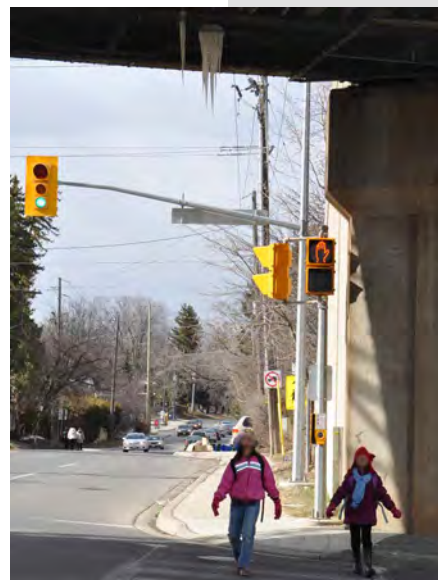
Grandview Area Residents Association Executive

At the time of printing this position has also been endorsed by:
 Settlers Park Residents Association Executive Members
 Markham Citizens Coalition for Responsive Government
 Bayview Glen Residents Association Executive Members

Winter is Coming Again

The CN Proctor bridge is a landmark in our community.

Unfortunately every winter it has tended to grow very large and potentially dangerous icicles. It seems as though this should have been a fairly simple issue to address. In fact, GARA has been working with Councillor Burke, City officials and CN staff to remedy the situation. Most recently Canadian National Railways have installed a heating element to melt the icicles. Hopefully this will be the end of that particular winter hazard.



Markham's New PetConnect Loyalty Card Program

The City of Markham with our new partner PetConnect has launched the first Pet Owner Loyalty Card Program in York Region.

Our new PetConnect Rewards Program is an added bonus for responsible pet owners who have licensed their pets. They can enjoy savings and rewards from more than 70 retail stores and services, right here in Markham. The PetConnect Rewards card is valid for one year from the date of registration and can be used at all of our PetConnect retailers and service companies.

The program is simple: Existing Markham licensed pet owners, as well as those who purchase their pet's licence on or after May 1, 2014, are automatically granted a PetConnect membership entitling them to special savings and exclusive offers.

Pet licensing has many benefits for pets, their owners and our community. If your licensed pet becomes lost, and is found by a Markham Animal Services, their first ride home is free! In addition, our licensing programs help Markham manage our pet population; support lost and abandoned animals with food and shelter and provides help to sick or injured wildlife.



So take a minute to check out this wag worthy program at www.petconnectcard.com. To apply for a new pet licence or to renew an existing one, visit the Online Forms section at www.markham.ca



Calling All Hosers!

Well, the summer is behind us, the trees are beginning to turn, the Leafs are getting ready to hit the ice for another season and so are we.

Last year's creation and maintenance of our outdoor ice rink was a phenomenal success and seeing all the families & hockey addicts making full use of our labour of love was extremely rewarding for everyone who volunteered.



A new version of the rink is on the drawing board and the first order of business is to get the rink ready for the season. We need dedicated, hearty individuals who are interested in helping us scrape and flood our local rink. One or two days a week would be the commitment, assuming we have enough people signing up to help.

So let's start sharpening the scrapers, dust off the Ronboni and lay out the winter woollies – you can get fresh air, exercise and do a little something for your community! Want to be a true Hoser? We can make it happen!

Brian Forrester

Please send me an email at bkforrester@sympatico.ca



Message From Our Councillor



Dear Residents,

Thank you for your overwhelming support during our recent municipal election! Every one of your votes reaffirmed our democracy and made it stronger. I am honoured and humbled to represent you this term of Council and very excited about serving all the residents of the expanded Markham -Thornhill Ward 1. I'm committed to continue to work together with local business and preserve the quality of life we cherish in Thornhill.

I look forward to working in collaboration with GARA towards the completion of the Section 37 projects in Grandview area. We have retained JSW+ Associates as our Landscape Architect for the projects. Public information meetings will be set up in the near future to present concepts and construction schedules for a splash pad in Proctor Park, a band shell outdoor stage and a durable base for the community ice rink in Grandview Park. The City is also currently working with the School Board towards the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the installation and shared use of playground equipment in the vicinity of E.J. Sands Public School. We will keep you posted on our progress.

The Yonge-Steeles Corridor Transportation Study is progressing well. The working group continues to meet and work towards addressing historical and new transportation issues. The Transportation Study will establish a future transportation vision for the proposed Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan which includes respecting the existing neighbourhood and achieving a more sustainable and balanced transportation system including walking, cycling, and public transit. Many thanks to the residents who are volunteering on this committee.

As always, if you have an issue of local concern, please feel free to contact me at 905-479-7747 or vburke@markham.ca. Let me know if you wish to be added to my email distribution list. Subscribers to this list receive periodic updates regarding Council meetings, general information and City's events.

Sincerely,

A Sidewalk Coming To A Block Near You

The World on Yonge Development sits on the **north side** of Meadowview Avenue at Yonge Street. The City of Markham plans to construct a sidewalk from this development at Meadowview, along the north side of Doncaster Avenue to join with the current sidewalk that ends just south of the CN Bridge.

This will encourage residents to walk to the commercial businesses in the vicinity. In addition, since Doncaster is a bus route, this will allow improved transit access. Affected properties will be notified by the city. Construction was to begin in the summer of 2014 but is now rescheduled for late spring/early summer 2015.

If you have any questions, please contact Dereje Tafesse, P.Eng., Capital Works Engineer at 905-4477-7000 ex. 2034 or dtafesse@markham.ca

Thank You Neighbours

A tip of the hat and a nod of thanks are due to neighbourhood residents who have made our community a little safer. Until recently a hedge at the corner of Henderson and Dalmeny has blocked drivers from clearly seeing oncoming cars or pedestrians. It has now been removed by the homeowner. Thank you for contributing to a safer neighbourhood. Other residents on corner lots may want to check their properties for plantings that obstruct vehicular sight lines.



Power to the People: The Sequel

I've never spent so much time tracking the sun (sunrise, sunset, the angle above the horizon) and contemplating the clouds. The waiting and speculation are over; we've installed 28 solar panels on our roof and our neighbour has installed 35 panels. We've generated our first 100 kW-hr of electricity and saved 50kg of carbon dioxide emissions (reduced our carbon footprint.)

We're now in the commissioning phase (monitoring, rearranging, and optimizing). Unlike our neighbour's solar system, ours isn't performing as it should. The combination of strings, combiners, and inverters, needs to be tweaked. While it won't be a concern in the summer because the sun is higher in the sky, shade from our own birch, which we've partially trimmed, and shade from the neighbour's pine are causing a system imbalance. Until this is sorted, generation is less than optimal. Our system's data is stored on the cloud (a different type) where we can view and analyze panel by panel production to optimize performance.

Since we decided to take the plunge, it has taken six months of approvals, site measurements, design, and installation to be on the grid, generating electricity. Within one week of signing up, our application was submitted. We received approval from the Ontario Power Authority and our distributor, PowerStream. The site measurements (including attic investigation) were concluded by May 30 and on June 5 we had our preliminary design, which took another five weeks to finalize. Due to our contractor's other work commitments (mostly commercial), we then had to wait two months for the installation to begin. The installation was complete in three days. PowerStream arrived one week later for the final hookup to the grid. Today, October 20/2014 we signed a Connection Agreement with PowerStream.



Despite having received our necessary approvals, the provincial election caused concern that the microFit program would be cancelled if a Conservative government under Tim Hudak were elected. I've been told by the once-nervous installers that 1,000 direct, full-time, jobs would have been lost had the program been cancelled.

The \$0.39 per kW-hr we receive under a 20-year contract is a solar subsidy; we currently pay \$0.07 to \$0.12 (depending on the time of day) per kW-hr for electricity. In 2009 when the microFit program was introduced, the subsidy was \$0.81, by 2012 it was \$0.54 and in 2013 reduced again to \$0.39. Rumour has it that the \$0.39 per kW-hr payback will be reduced to \$0.24 in the near future. Without this subsidy, the sustainable power industry (wind and solar), which has contributed to the elimination of coal-fired generating stations, would not have gotten off the ground. Ontario is now among the world leaders in sustainable energy. The industry is still in its infancy; panel efficiency is improving, there is now a roofing shingle that incorporates PV cells, and storage systems (like batteries) need a lot of work.

The microFit program remains alive and hopefully well. As a measure of its popularity, over the past summer, PowerStream has connected two microFit systems per week. While that seems like a lot, the Ontario microFit procurement target for 2014 was 65 mW – that's roughly 6,500 households. Apparently only 15% of the target has been used so far this year. There's room for more of you.

For more information on the microFit program visit the following website: <http://microfit.powerauthority.on.ca/faqs/questions-specific-microfit-program>

Walter Bauer

Your Tree Matters!

Our neighbourhood trees have had it rough lately: between this past winter's storms and the continued Emerald Ash Borer infestation. It's easy to forget how important these trees are. They benefit everyone: they reduce the chances of both flooding and drought, they clean the air and help keep our neighbourhoods comfortable all year reducing air conditioning needs by up to 22% in summer and lowering winter heating costs by slowing down cold winter winds. City trees also increase property values and even reduce the risks of cardiovascular and respiratory illness in residents of the area!

This is why every tree matters, and why, in 2008, the City of Markham implemented a Tree Preservation Bylaw to protect this common resource.

City of Markham Tree Preservation Bylaw:

Under this bylaw, all Markham property owners must obtain a permit before injuring or removing **any tree** with a diameter of greater than 20cm. Permits don't cost anything, but fines for contravening this bylaw range from \$500 to \$100,000. Better to be safe than sorry, and call the town before you cut!

When does the bylaw apply? When you want to injure or remove **any tree** with a diameter of greater than 20cm when measured at 1.37m off the ground.

ANY TREE - this means all trees located in Markham, including: trees on private property, trees that may be already dead or dying, and trees that may be diseased.

TREE INJURIES: an injury can include heavy pruning or removal of limbs (even if it's for safety reasons), or damage from nearby construction (such as scraped bark, broken branches, or even compacted ground from moving heavy equipment over the roots). If you are planning any major construction, you can call the City's Development Services division to see if you need a tree protection plan for your property.

Further information:

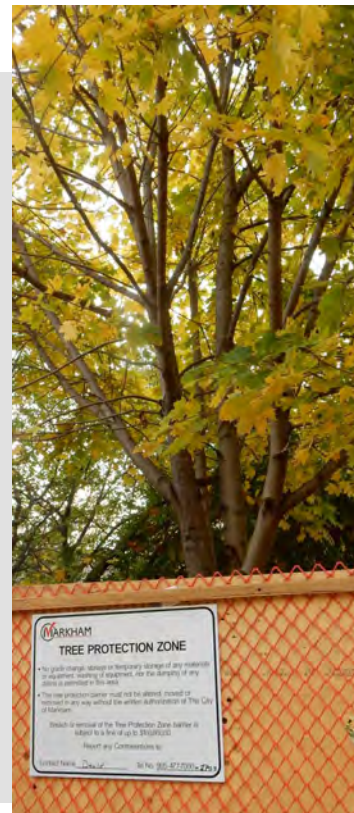
Reporting suspected bylaw infractions: call Markham's Customer Service Line at 905-477-5530.

About the tree preservation bylaw: <http://bit.ly/1rOFr48>

Tree permit application: available at the Markham Civic Centre, or online at <http://bit.ly/1wW0GVY>

City of Markham Development Services: 905-475-4861

Want to plant a tree? Check out LEAF's Backyard Tree planting program: www.yourleaf.org



Sarah Melamed-Simon

Serving Our Community Since 1989



Henderson Avenue Kids' Club

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Henderson Avenue Public School
It's \$25.00/person for the season (October – April)
For more information,
Call John or Jane at (905) 881-5273

Policy on Newsletter Advertisements

The Grandview Area Residents Association (GARA) is now accepting small advertisements from local residents and businesses in our area to be included in the newsletter. These advertisements are to be the size of a business card with all art work completed and included by the advertiser. GARA will assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions in the ads. They will be printed as is.

The executive of the association has the absolute right to refuse or accept any advertisements without explanation. Likewise, the executive has the absolute right to restrict the number of times any particular advertiser may place ads in its newsletters. If you have any questions about this policy, or would like to place an ad, please contact: Newsletter Editor Corie Bonnaffon at bonnaffon@yahoo.com

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HELPING YOUR BUSINESS BECOME KNOWN TO OUR RESIDENTS.



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Grandview Area Residents Association (GARA)

Serving Thornhill residents in the area between Yonge St. and Bayview Ave., south of the CN tracks to Steeles Ave.

Our Mission

The Grandview Area Residents Association is a volunteer-based membership organization that acts as an advocate to protect and enhance the experience of residents within the community.

Our Roles and Responsibilities

- To have a balanced understanding of issues based on the spectrum of views within the neighbourhood
- To represent members and the greater community in a respectful manner on all issues
- To support communication and awareness of local concerns
- To act for the community in its dealings with all levels of government

Tell GARA your issues and your views by e-mail on the form below:

E-mail – garamail@yahoo.ca

Ricardo Mashregi (Chair) – rmashregi@hotmail.com or 416-577-9543

Or go to our WEBSITE at www.thornhillgara.com for the latest news, events, photos and other GARA information.

Join GARA or renew your membership, using the form below, and help protect and improve our community.

Members will be entitled to vote or be nominated for the Executive at the Annual General Meeting. There may be other Association meetings to attend regarding topical issues.

GRANDVIEW AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT MY NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION SO THAT IT CAN
CONTINUE TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF RESIDENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY..

Please check off the applicable box: NEW MEMBERSHIP ☐ RENEWAL ☐

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____ (our best method of reaching you and keeping you up-to-date with local issues and events. E-mail addresses will not be used for any other purposes or shared outside of GARA)

Please share your issues and views on how we can best pursue our mission while fulfilling our roles and responsibilities in the space below:

GARA always needs your help in our community. Please indicate where you can contribute:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering Newsletters | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing Social Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying Markham Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Park and Woods Maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Various Committee Work (Traffic, Flood, Safety and Security, etc.) | |

Membership is \$10.00 per household per year. Payment by cash or cheque is welcome.

Please make cheques payable to **Grandview Area Residents Association** and deliver or mail this application, along with your payment, to:

Majda Ambrozic 12 Almond Avenue Thornhill, Ontario L3T 1L1