



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner

DATE: July 8, 2020

SUBJECT: HERITAGE PERMIT APPLICATION
Markham Village Community Centre
Replacement of Non-compliant Electronic Message Board
6041 Highway 7 East
Markham Village Heritage Conservation District
File No. HE 20 118874

Property/Building Description:

- Markham Village Community Centre, a modern building of the 1960s.

Use:

- Community Centre and Arena.

Heritage Status:

- Located in the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District - Type C Building (non-heritage).

Application/Proposal

- Recreation staff is seeking permission to replace an existing electronic LED information ground sign that was installed in 2003 on top of an existing internally illuminated sign box. The sign has stopped functioning. The electronic sign is used to display public information, including notices concerning emergency situations.
- The replacement sign is proposed to fit within the existing sign structure.
- The internally illuminated ground sign below the electronic message board appears to have been grandfathered as an existing sign that is legally non-conforming to the Sign By-law.

Background

- In 2014 By-law Enforcement staff noted that the existing electronic LED sign installed on top of an existing ground sign at the Markham Village Community Centre was installed without consultation with Heritage Markham Committee or Heritage staff

The City can be exempted from the Sign By-law provisions if the sign is a public information sign (which is a sign erected by a level of government). However, in the past the City has typically complied with the Markham Sign By-law provisions (regarding issues of size, illumination, etc.).

- Section 4.6.1 of the Sign By-law indicates that “The following signs shall be permitted in all zone categories in the City and shall not be required to obtain a permit: (c) Public Information signs. The approval of Heritage Markham is required when this sign is located within a Special Sign District, as described in Section 10 of this by-law”.
- The Policies of Section 10 (Special Sign Districts) of the Markham Sign By-law (which are the Heritage Districts) indicate that internal illumination and Readograph signs (electronic message display) are prohibited.
- The Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Plan adopted by Council also does not permit this type of signage (animated signs, internally illuminated).
- The Fire Department installed a similar sign in the mid-2000s, but removed it from the Main Street North fire hall when informed by staff that it did not comply with heritage district and sign by-law policies.
- Recreation staff wish to replace the sign to continue to be used as a “Public Information Sign” and have provided the following reasons:
 - It is strictly used for public info purposes- not commercial advertising
 - It provides exposure to community events
 - It can be used to provide emergency info to residents in times of crisis
 - The sign is not unsightly
- In 2014, Recreation staff asked submitted a Heritage Permit application seeking permission to retain the existing electronic LED information sign that was installed in 2003.

Staff Comment

- Heritage Section staff identified the electronic sign issue to Recreation staff in 2005 but no action was taken to address the issue at that time. However, in 2014 Recreation staff applied for a Heritage Permit to address the compliance issue. The Heritage Permit was not supported by Heritage Markham and the matter was left with Recreation staff to determine what they wished to do. It was not taken to Council for resolution. The existing sign now needs replacement.
- A significant factor with respect to the approval of this sign type is that over the years, Heritage staff has been contacted by others in the community asking why the City can have a readograph electronic sign but private commercial property owners cannot.

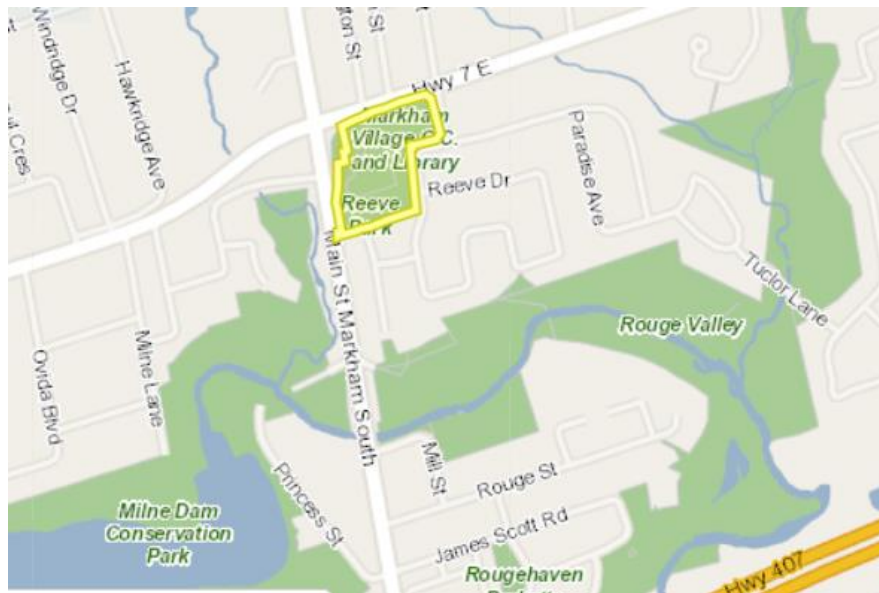
- Heritage Section staff believe that the City should lead by example and comply with the Sign By-law and the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Plan policies. The electronic message component of the sign should be replaced with another type of changeable message board that is non-electronic.
- If Heritage Markham does not recommend support for the replacement of the electronic sign board, it is appropriate that the issue be referred to Council for further discussion and a decision.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

THAT Heritage Markham Committee recommends that the City should lead by example and comply with the Sign By-law and the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Plan policies both of which prohibit the use of electronic message boards in heritage conservation districts;

AND THAT the Recreation Department investigate other approaches to having changeable messages as part of its signage.

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Location Map



**Existing Ground Sign at the Markham Village Community Centre
6041 Highway 7 East**