

PETITION TO MARKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

By Markham Residents for Responsible Community Planning

Presented at Markham Town Hall, Markham Civic Centre,
101 Town Centre Boulevard, Markham, Ontario

October 25, 2011

Background (Preamble):

The petition we are here to present addresses four separate, but related issues. We have over 2,350 online petitions on the issue that first drew residents' ire and frustration and in a capacity meeting at Markham Village Community Centre this past Sunday, the 150 residents who attended unanimously agreed to all the points raised in this petition.

What triggered residents' frustration and decision to investigate these matters fully was the approval by Council on September 27th of the ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF MARKHAM's SITE PLAN APPLICATION TO BUILD A MOSQUE AT 6232 16TH AVENUE. The approval of the mosque despite what councillors have claimed, was made without consultation, the knowledge or approval of local residents. The vast majority of residents knew nothing of this building until we read it in the Economist & Sun.

Residents want a public hearing where all local residents are fairly involved and are heard on this decision. This petition is in response to that public outcry, as well as the other issues which stem from and are related to excessive development in this area and construction of this large structure on one of the busiest roads in York Region.

Residents demand immediate and firm action to stop or reverse these ill-conceived decisions by Markham Town Council that potentially would ruin the historical, cultural and aesthetic heritage of Markham as we know it.

- If current plans go forward there will be over development and dense population increases in an area comprising less than 1 square km from Swan Lake on the East to the intersection at 16 and Hwy. 48 and then north. This area includes a proposal of 160 Townhouses on Swan Lake, a Mosque with basic capacity of 544 to 1600 and 2 high rise condominiums plus a town house development behind it.

This drastic increase in population density will have a severely negative impact on:

- Traffic, safety, parking and congestion.
- The preservation of the historic and ecologically sensitive Swan Lake Area and the Park between Brother Andre High School and the Mosque site.
- Schools (there are none under construction) and infrastructure - Roads, Storm drains and sewers.

Petition:

1. We, as signatories of this petition, believe that we have been misled and misinformed by Council, Real Estate Developers and the Group developing the Mosque. We demand that Markham Council place a moratorium until further notice on all construction in the area from Swan Lake on Highway 16th, West to Highway 48 and North on Highway 48 to Bur Oak Avenue. This will provide an opportunity to investigate, report on and satisfy residents' concerns

2. We request that a public hearing be held to discuss these matters and which would include all residents of the area, as opposed to the small sample who live in the few blocks north of 16th Avenue, referred to by Councillor Campbell as supportive.
3. Council must be more accountable to residents and make decisions after full and open consultation with their constituents, as opposed to the "behind closed doors" approach we have seen.
4. As taxpayers we have the right to expect that the Town of Markham will operate an effective Planning Department that will make recommendations based on a scientific and factual basis as opposed to lobbying by developers and special interest groups which some might think appears to be the case in recent decisions.