

The Town Clerk  
Town of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3

*General Letter - Receive*

For consideration of the Committee of the Whole at their next meeting.

**Recommendation: To not permit any religious symbolism to be displayed on the property of the Thornhill Community Centre.**

Background: On November 5, 2006, I sent a request to the Town asking with whom I needed to communicate in order to have some Christmas decorations placed outside the Thornhill Community Centre similar in size to the Jewish Menorah that stands on Bayview Avenue in front of the Community Centre each year during the year-end holiday season.

I received a reply from Mr. Glen Taylor, Manager of Facilities, stating the Town of Markham does not decorate the exterior of any of its facilities for any seasonal holidays throughout the year.

Regarding the Menorah at the Thornhill Community Centre, Mr. Taylor explained, that in the early 1980's, the Synagogue, now located on Green Lane in Thornhill, used to rent and hold Hanukkah celebrations at the Thornhill Community Centre. At that time they asked the Advisory Committee for permission to erect a Menorah at their expense on Bayview Avenue. Town Council reportedly approved this and the Menorah has since been erected on an annual basis up to the present.

Another religious group, St. Luke's Church, at one time used to erect a Nativity Scene in front of the Thornhill Community Centre, but has since moved it to the front of their Church on Green Lane.

The appearance of the Menorah each year in the front of our Community Centre without any other religious or seasonal decoration, gives the impression that the facility is a cultural or religious centre for a specific group and not open to all. Markham is a wonderfully multi-cultural community and I do not think this is the image we wish to leave.

As the decoration policy to which Mr. Taylor referred prescribes no decorations for any seasonal holiday are allowed on the exterior of any of its facilities, it is requested that the Menorah not be permitted to be displayed in front of the Thornhill Community Centre.

Thank You,

Man-Li Morse  
205 Henderson Avenue  
Thornhill, Ontario L3T 2L8  
December 5, 2006