

Hau, Lucy

Subject: FW: Extended Driveways - amended By-Law 2006-96

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Sent: June 27, 2006 10:44 AM

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Subject: Extended Driveways - amended By-Law 2006-96

Mayor Cousens and Members of Council:

Writing on my own behalf, i.e. not representing the Working Group or any other organization with which I am affiliated, I endorse the recommendations being made by Town Staff in the report dated June 27.

It is greatly appreciated that staff have amended their proposal to Council, taking into account the public consultation process and Working Group recommendations.

The proposed amendments to By-law 2006-96 combined with the Staff recommendation on non-enforcement of interior side lot line setbacks for existing driveways establishes a standard for existing and new driveway extensions to co-exist on a level playing field, i.e. those who wish to expand their driveways in existing and new neighbourhoods will have similar opportunity to those driveways expanded prior to enactment of the by-law. At the same time, the soft landscaping requirements proposed based on width of lot frontage will address the need for storm water management, water absorption and snow storage areas and create an objective standard for what will in most instances be an aesthetically and environmentally beneficial green space during non-snow storage months.

Hopefully, with implementation of the proposed improvements to public transit in Markham reliance on the automobile will decrease and so too will decrease the need for ever larger driveways.

Of the estimated 5% of existing driveways that do not comply with the standard proposed by Staff, I anticipate that the number which do not have a minimum of 25% soft landscaping will be minimal. Hopefully, the incentives offered to encourage voluntary compliance will be sufficient to reduce the number of 'worst offenders' to virtually nil. I endorse the Staff proposal to require a minimum 25% soft landscaping as an alternative to the concept of a minimum 1.5 metre soft landscaping apron. The percentage assessment of front yard space will allow homeowners more creativity and flexibility in the determination of driveway and landscaping contours.

Although the concept of amnesty (as proposed by the Working Group) cannot be included in the by-law, it is appreciated that Staff are recommending acceptance of the principle for enforcement purposes – while still endorsing the concept of encouraging those who have paved from lot line to lot line to restore soft landscaping and comply with the standards generally recognized by their neighbours.

Also appreciated is the Staff recommendation to take time over the next six months to prepare the communication and education plan. I have every confidence that Staff will use this time wisely in the preparation of appropriate materials, and testing of the materials with groups of residents well in advance of the proposed release date so that the communication and education plan will not end up being rushed to production to meet the January 1 deadline proposed in the Staff report.

The Staff have creatively found a first step to regulate driveway construction through the licensing of contractors who provide

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paving and interlock services in the Town of Markham. They are to be applauded for this. In addition to by-law compliance, this licensing process will allow homeowners one more opportunity to assess the legitimacy of those who offer to provide these services as we will now be able to check for a license issued by the Town.

I wholeheartedly endorse the recommendation that the Town continue to maintain a general prohibition of on-street overnight parking.

I feel privileged to have been invited to serve in what I believe has been a fundamental expression of the democratic process that serves to make our country and our community a world leader. Flawed though our process may be, it allows for input of opinions from anyone interested in speaking out on the issue at hand. Inevitably, a consensus of opinion presents itself and that has happened with the process which has resulted in the proposal now before Council.

I encourage Council to make a decision tonight to enact By-law 2006-96, thus giving effect to a fair standard for proceeding on this issue and closing the Pandora's Box of potential problems that may result if an enforceable, yet generous, standard is not provided before the current construction season proceeds further.

Blessings.

Don

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