

June 2020

## Our Neighbourhood News

These are indeed very strange times. Some of us have been struck with the disease itself while for many it has been hard to adjust to the constantly changing demands and worries. To our neighbours who have suffered directly with COVID 19 we hope your health is returning, to those who may have lost friends or loved ones our condolences, and to everyone who either professionally, as a volunteer or just as a friend or good neighbour has stood up and helped we all thank you.

Serving Our Community Since 1989



[www.thornhillgara.com](http://www.thornhillgara.com)

### The GARA Local Hero(es)

Some time ago we had imagined featuring a local resident in each issue of the newsletter who makes a special contribution to the community, a Local Hero. We had even called for nominations in the last edition.

As with some so many things recently, once we sat down to consider this idea in the present we saw things quite differently. We realized that the GARA neighbourhood is full of heroes whom we want to salute and thank. So to all our neighbours who are doctors, nurses and other medical staff, and to those who have continued to work in all kinds of essential services making sure the rest of us can stay safe -- you are GARA Local Heroes. **THANK YOU ALL!**



## No Sidewalks ? Keep Safe by Walking on the Left



Recently, more of us have found walking through the neighbourhood to be a welcome break. Let's make sure we are doing it safely.

Many people walk as if they were driving ... on the right-hand side of the street. This is not the safest way. Ontario's traffic laws say pedestrians should walk on the left, **facing** oncoming traffic. On the right, traffic approaches you from behind and so you have only your ears to rely on to know what's coming. If you face on-coming traffic you and the driver can better understand each other's intentions and if necessary you can move quickly out of their way.

## A Gift from a Neighbour



Paul Kelly, a neighbour and professional artist has asked us to share his picture of tulips with everyone, hoping it may lift some of our spirits.

## Updated Rules for Garbage and Recycling during the Pandemic

During this difficult time Markham has given all residents updated rules for how to treat our garbage and recycling materials.

Place all used tissues, face masks, latex gloves and wipes in your **clear garbage bag**. As always, do not flush any wipes down the toilet. These can cause serious issues with your plumbing and with the City's infrastructure.

Ensure all garbage bags are securely closed to protect our City garbage collectors. Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling any waste material. (Also wash your hands after handling your garbage and recycling bins.)

The Thornhill Recycling Depot on Green Lane re-opens on Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>. Information about new COVID procedures can be found [here](#).

Let's all do our part to keep ourselves, our neighbours, our environment, and Markham employees healthy.



## What's a Residents or Ratepayers Association for Anyway?

*The express and only purpose for the creation and on-going existence of the \_\_\_\_\_ Ratepayers Association is the preservation of the \_\_\_\_\_ and surrounding area, and to protect the quality of life that is afforded its residents.* From City of Markham documentation.

The Grandview Area Residents Association was founded in 1989 when 40 neighbours concerned about a proposed development came together in Jean and Roger Child's home. Since then GARA's members have worked together, month in and month out, to preserve and protect our neighbourhood.

When Henderson School burnt down, GARA fought to have it rebuilt. When much of the neighbourhood flooded, we advocated for and achieved new flood control infrastructure and a fair system to pay for it. When in-fill housing and large scale development projects began to change our landscape, GARA worked to make the changes as appropriate as possible to the neighbourhood.



GARA is an advocate for our community, a means of communication between residents and the City and between ourselves as neighbours. If you are not already a member join us! Whenever we advocate for the neighbourhood, the strength of our voice depends not only on the validity of our arguments but most importantly on how many members we represent. Membership information is on Page 8.



## Neighbourhood Developments

As part of its responsibilities, the GARA Executive has always maintained on-going interaction with our local Councillor and other local elected officials.

We recently met virtually with Councillor Keith Irish to share concerns and priorities. From previous meetings he knows we are particularly concerned about traffic safety in the area and the large developments in the planning stages on both sides of Yonge at Steeles. This is what we learned.

### Traffic Safety

- Design is almost complete for a sidewalk on the north side of Grandview Avenue from Henderson Avenue to Dudley Avenue and then connecting on the west side of Dudley to Meadowview/Doncaster is almost complete. If construction can begin in September this new sidewalk will be completed in November.
- Design for continuing the sidewalk on the east side of Henderson Avenue from Grandview Avenue to Steeles Avenue is well underway with construction in 2021.
- The No Right Turn signs at Proctor and Bayview will be maintained.
- Finding ways to discourage or even block traffic taking shortcuts through our area continues to be a priority.



100 Steeles Ave. W.



180 Steeles Ave. W.

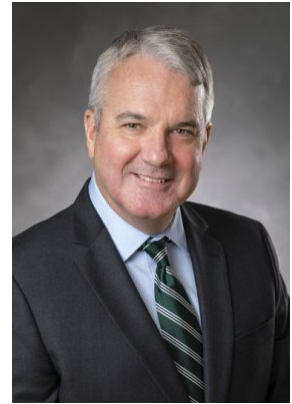


2 Steeles Ave. W.

### Yonge and Steeles Developments

- Zonix, the company planning to build towers on Steeles Ave between Dudley and Willowdale is having difficulties buying all the houses they will need and so will not be moving ahead in the near future. However, they continue to work with the City to develop their plans. They have agreed to redesign the buildings on the south side of Highland Park to be less overwhelming to the neighbours on the north side.
- The North West corner of Yonge and Steeles, part of the City of Vaughan, is slated for extreme intensification with multiple 40+ story towers proposed. We are working with our colleagues in the Spring Farm Rate Payers Association while Keith and various Markham and City of Toronto officials and staff are encouraging their counterparts in Vaughan to minimize the size and effects of this development. To learn more [read](#)

## Message From Our Councillor



Thank you for the opportunity to share this update with GARA members.

### Council Approved Pandemic Relief Measures

On March 27 Markham Council held its first-ever virtual Council meeting. Prior to March 19 when the Provincial Government passed the *Municipal Emergency Act (2020)*, municipal councils were not permitted to meet this way. At that meeting, we approved with immediate effect the following pandemic relief measures:

Benefits for Residents	Benefits for Business
No late payment (penalty and interest) charges for residential property taxpayers from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020	No late payment (penalty and interest) charges for non-residential property taxpayers from October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020
Elimination of the 2020 Stormwater Fee of \$50	Elimination of the 2020 Stormwater Fee, a savings of \$560 for a property valued at \$2M
Elimination of the April 1, 2020 water rate increase of 7.8%	Elimination of the April 1, 2020 water rate increase of 7.8%
	Suspension of the Municipal Accommodation Tax from April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, to provide relief to hoteliers

For the latest updates on the COVID-19 pandemic and Markham’s response, please visit: [www.markham.ca/covid19](http://www.markham.ca/covid19)

### Proposed New Development: 36-60 Steeles Avenue East and 37-63 Highland Park Boulevard

I am in regular contact with representatives of the Zonix Group and I am pleased they are working closely with Markham Planning staff and have adjusted their plans based on initial feedback from the GARA Executive and me.

Zonix has now adopted a two-phased approach to the development they have planned for the block occupied by 27 homes bordered by Dudley and Willowdale Avenues, Highland Park and Steeles. Phase I will focus on the western half-portion of the block. Their plans remain a work-in-progress and have not been finalized. Once more is known there will be opportunities for residents to comment on the proposal.

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### Grandview Park Construction

The contractor stopped work in early April according to the provincial government's emergency orders regarding non-essential work. At time of writing the city's Manager, Parks and Open Space Development anticipates work will re-start shortly and is optimistic that construction of the new amenities (skateboard zone, splash pad, a new playground with improved accessibility features, a pavilion building with washrooms, and other related landscape improvements) will be completed by late Fall 2020.

Keith Irish

Councillor, Ward 1 Thornhill, City of Markham

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**Editor's note:** This article was submitted several weeks ago and due to a delay in publication does not reflect recent COVID developments e.g. Work has resumed in Grandview Park

### Protecting Neighbourhood Trees

In the Grandview Area, we have experienced a significant increase in the Gypsy Moth population. This pest is worrisome because left unchecked its caterpillars can eat their way through all a tree's leaves killing it in the process.

The best and safest way to control this moth is to remove its egg casings early in the spring before the tree's leaves have opened. Peter Cox, a professional arborist and GARA volunteer extraordinaire surveyed all the front yard trees in the area. He found worrying egg masses on trees on every street in the area.

After consultation with Markham forestry staff and the affected homeowners, he found and removed a total of 490 egg masses from 81 trees representing a potential of 150,000 gypsy moth caterpillars. This service was performed at no cost to the homeowner, to preserve and protect the health of the trees in our neighbourhood.



Gypsy Moth Egg Casing

The City of Markham intends to add gypsy moth tree pest information to their web site this spring. They do not have a plan for controlling the gypsy moth on street trees nor do they have the resources to do so at this time.

Please refer to: the Canadian government [website](#) for more information and [Gypsy moth control -City of Toronto](#).



## Free Gardening Advice and Guidance

Did you pay your annual \$10 membership fee to the Grandview Area Resident's Association?

This year if you choose, as a bonus included in the membership fee, you can book a free one hour garden consultation in your garden.

We have a group of four residents, very experienced and successful gardeners volunteering their time to answer your gardening and tree questions.

Topics may include:

- **Lawn care** – watering, fertilizing, weed control, insect concerns, mowing and lawn diseases
- **Tree and shrub pruning** – proper pruning practices, knowing when to hire a professional, and did they provide a quality job?
- **Selecting the right tree, shrub or plant for the right place** – sun / shade tolerant plants; drought tolerant plants; selecting flower bulbs for summer and fall planting
- **Garden coaching** – looking at how your garden is designed: how to minimize maintenance requirements: How to divide and relocate plants: how to edge your garden beds: weed identification
- **Vegetable Growing** - are you considering growing vegetables? We have someone who can help you plan and advise about its implementation.
- **Other Resources** - we can guide you to reliable sources of garden and tree related information.



Please remember this is a one hour consultation. We have no interest in doing physical work in anyone's garden or promoting the use of any landscape company or product. Nor can we offer guarantees.. Plants and weather can be fickle.

If you are not currently a GARA member, go to <https://thornhillgara.com/membership-form/> to join or renew your membership To set up your appointment contact Peter Cox at 905-889-8963 or [pcox1@rogers.com](mailto:pcox1@rogers.com)



## Grandview Area Residents Association (GARA)

Join GARA or renew your membership and be a part of the important work it does.

[Click](#) here to join electronically

or

**Complete the form below and deliver or mail it along with your payment to:  
Majda Ambrozic 12 Almond Avenue Thornhill, Ontario L3T 1L1**

Please check off the applicable box:

NEW MEMBERSHIP  RENEWAL

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*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:

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GARA always needs your help in our community. Please indicate how 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, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Rink Maintenance       |

Membership is \$10.00 per household per year. Payment by cash, cheque or on-line is welcome. Please make cheques payable to **Grandview Area Residents Association**