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In This Issue

- **Greening Vaughan Day**
- **Yonge Street Study**
- **GTA Pooling Ends!**
- **Flamingo & Bathurst Woodlot**
- **Pesticide Bylaw & Plan**

Contact my office:

905-832-8585 ext 8349

email: alan.shefman@vaughan.ca

www.vaughan.ca

Executive Assistant:

Debi Traub

905-832-8585 ext 8685

Email: debi.traub@vaughan.ca

2141 Major Mackenzie Drive

Vaughan, Ontario L6A 1T1

Web Links

City of Vaughan - www.vaughan.ca

First Greening Vaughan Day a Great Success!

As a result of a recommendation that I brought to Council last fall, the first of five Greening Vaughan Days this year was held at the Garnet Williams Community Centre on April 29. This summer each of Vaughan's five Wards will host a similar event. At Garnet, mulch was available free of charge and composters, blue boxes and green bins were available for purchase. Our staff reported that it was a very successful day all round, with large numbers of residents coming to take advantage of the availability of the mulch and the other recycling materials.



Councillor Alan Shefman at Greening Vaughan Day

ROADWATCH

<http://city.vaughan.on.ca/community/CitizenReportForm.cfm>

Council Approves Yonge Street Study from Steeles to 407

Following an extensive discussion at Council Budget Committee, Council received a staff report and approved a plan to initiate an extensive planning study of the entire length of Vaughan/Yonge Street (with the exception of the area that was recently dealt with – Arnold Avenue to Centre Street).

This study, expected to take from 2 to 3 years to complete, was initiated as a result of a variety of factors including the Viva rapid transit project, the provincial government's Places to Grow (relating to intensification of development) program and other pressures that are developing on one of the City's most important thoroughfares.

An important aspect of the approved recommendation is that every effort will be made to work cooperatively with our Yonge Street partners, the Town of Markham and York Region. Markham has already initiated a Yonge Street study for the area from Steeles to just north of the railway bridge. The catalyst for Markham's review of the area is a very large high density project that is being proposed for the Pharmacy 1 Drug and Food (*formerly Hy and Zels*) plaza site (located at the Northeast Corner of Doncaster and Yonge).

It is expected that the terms of reference and the consultant selection process will take place in the early fall. One part of the study will require extensive public consultation by all interested parties.

GTA Pooling Ends!!

The recent Ontario budget has dealt with one of the major issues that the City of Vaughan has had over the last number of years by ending the GTA tax pooling system established by the former Ontario Government when it downloaded social services on municipalities. Approximately 7% of your current property taxes collected went to Toronto under this system. In fact, the pooling expense was the second largest item on the Region of York's budget after policing. Vaughan residents have been taxed many millions of dollars that were not used to support our services.

Beginning this year, the pooling contributions will be rolled back to 2004 levels and every year after the contribution will be decreased by 1/6 until completely eliminated in 2013. It is reported that York Region's share of pooling costs will decrease by \$15 million in 2007. While this is great news for all York Region residents, City Council is very concerned that your tax dollars – approximately one third of the York Region pooling dollars come from Vaughan – are applied to

projects in the City. At least one other region has decided to share the pooling funds with its first level municipalities.

Flamingo and Bathurst - Responding to a Resident's Concerns

On Friday, May 6th I received a message of some urgency from a Ward 5 resident wanting to know what was going on in the wooded area at the corner of Bathurst and Flamingo. It seemed that a construction crew was on-site, cutting and clearing trees. To the immediate east of the wood lot there is an empty lot that I knew was part of a proposed residential development.

After going to the site to assess the situation I called my Executive Assistant, Debi Traub, asking her to take immediate action to get hold of our staff who might know what is going on at that location.

On Monday morning staff attended at the site and enquired about the activity going on. They were told it was part of the site preparation for the development of seventeen homes. The extent of the tree cutting was viewed and checked with our records, including the site plan and the zoning for the area.

By Monday afternoon it was determined that the plan for the site had been approved by Council many years ago and the zoning allowed for substantial cutting of trees leaving a t-shaped open space (wood lot) along the Bathurst face of the property and then extending east through the centre of the development.

It is very regrettable when we lose any of our natural areas. It is my hope that our proposed Tree Protection bylaw, which will be coming to Council later this month, will be able to give us a much greater ability to preserve our wooded areas and individual trees.

Pesticide Bylaw and Plan

On February 5, 2007, I brought to Council a recommendation to ban pesticides on private property in the City of Vaughan. At that time Council asked our staff to come back with a draft bylaw and action plan in May. Staff will be presenting their report at the Committee of the Whole meeting on May 28. It is expected that the report will include the draft bylaw, a plan for extensive public consultation, and an information and education program. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m.

Tell everybody about W5Update!!

We want to be able to let more Ward 5 residents know about what's going on in their neighbourhood and across the city.

Please forward your copy of W5Update to your friends, or, if you prefer, send us their email address and we will send them a copy for their consideration.

Missed an edition of W5Update? View current and past editions and sign up for W5Update on the Vaughan website <http://tinyurl.com/295ybc>

AND

All of Councillor Shefman's newsletters can be downloaded in PDF format

from the Gallanough Resource Centre's web site at:

www.gallanough.com.
