

Richmond Hill! *Richmond Hill?* *Richmond Hill*



The town is conducting a “branding exercise” so that we as a community and as a corporation will project to the world that which distinguishes Richmond Hill from its neighbours. We are not Toronto, Vaughan, or Markham. How do we distinguish ourselves? Many places share our cultural diversity. They share our climate, drinking water, and some of our roadways. But there are significant differences.

One main feature of Richmond Hill is Yonge Street. It is the backbone of our Town and links our residential and commercial areas to other municipalities.

Richmond Hill has an ideal location for business with its close proximity to major cities and highways. Richmond Hill is home to over 5,000 businesses and some head offices such as BMW Canada, Mazda, Lexmark, Staples Business Depot and Tetra Pak to name a few.

Another significant feature of our town is the Oak Ridges Moraine which is the headwaters for the Rouge River, the Don River, and the Humber. This is the fresh water which flows to Lake Ontario and to Lake Simcoe which has its start in Richmond Hill. Our respect for the natural environment is one of the reasons that we are surrounded by over 1,300 acres (544 hectares) of forest, lakes, trails and community living space.

Richmond Hill is home to the David Dunlap Observatory. This is an historic site with international acclaim. Now that is unique. Richmond Hill is a diverse, educated, growing community with a rich heritage and a stellar future!

****Update:** The Conference Board of Canada has just proclaimed Richmond Hill as one of the top “City Magnets” in Canada.; a place where the quality of life, diversity, and hospitality attracts people from around the world.**

A survey of ‘Branding Richmond Hill’ will be on the Town’s website soon. www.richmondhill.ca.

Some Upcoming Community events ...

The Richmond Hill Winter Carnival will host its 42nd annual event from February 5th to 7th at the Mill Pond (west of Yonge, north of Major Mackenzie Drive). If you want to check out the festivities, you will find a short video at www.wintercarnival.net Come out and see the snow boarders, sky jumpers, or fighting Vikings while you enjoy music and hot chocolate. Parking is always a challenge so use the overflow parking on Trench St. across from York Central Hospital. That’s a short walk north to the pond. Don’t forget to bring your skates!

International Women’s Day will be celebrated on Sunday, March 7th from 3 – 6 p.m. at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on Yonge St. in our historic downtown. There will be commentary on the Changing Roles of Women, a feature film will be shown and food will be enjoyed!! Information at (905) 771-2498.

Seniors’ Fair 2010 Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, June 25th, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Anyone who is interested in an afternoon of performance and learning about senior’s programs in Richmond Hill will want to attend. You must be 50 years or older – no cheating! Details to come. www.onrichmondhill.com

Thank you for reading my newsletter. Questions or Concerns?

Call me at (905) 771-2498 or email: bhogg@richmondhill.ca

Brenda



Welcome 2010!



Brenda HOGG

Deputy Mayor, Richmond Hill

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2009 was a year filled with financial worries for many.

There were job losses and everyone’s spending needed to be reined in; from the personal right up to the national budget. You will see in this newsletter that the Town and the Region have made every effort to protect the services and programs which we provide while keeping taxes to a minimum.

On a personal note, 2009 was a great year for me and my family...I became a Grandma!

Protecting your Property Tax dollar:

York Region Council has just passed a \$4.9 billion budget with approval for \$3.5 billion of capital projects and \$1.4 billion for York Region services. There will be **no tax increase from York Region in 2010** and no fare increases for York Region Transit and Viva buses. For details see: www.york.ca

Richmond Hill’s budget was approved at a 1.96% increase in order to maintain services, improve services and prepare for future expenses. This will mean an increase of \$23.00 per year for the average residential home owner based on a house value of \$430,000. Through grants from the Federal and Provincial governments, Richmond Hill will be investing an unprecedented \$50 million in building and development across Town over the next year. That will be good for the local economy and stressful for everyone who is trying to avoid the traffic tie-ups due to road reconstruction. For details see: www.richmondhill.ca

York Region and Richmond Hill Official Plans Update:

Over the past term of office, your Town Council, Regional Council, and staff have worked with members of the public to create a new Official Plan. We incorporated several new pieces of legislation from the Province: the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, the Greenbelt Act, 2005, the Places to Grow Act, 2005, the Clean Water Act, 2006, the Metrolinx Act, 2006 and the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008 to direct growth and supporting infrastructure to designated urban areas. Our new Official Plans will help to protect our environmentally sensitive lands; our agricultural lands; and our employment lands from conversion to residential development.

The Province has predicted that York Region will grow to 1.5 million people by 2031 with approximately 800,000 jobs by 2031. Richmond Hill has been asked to plan for a minimum 40 % intensification within our urban area. Areas of high, medium, and low density development across Town will be designated. Long term planning for population growth will give our residents and businesses greater stability and predictability which means a safer investment climate.

York has now approved their Official Plan. Richmond Hill expects to approve our new Official Plan sometime this spring. The Official Plans may be viewed at: www.york.ca and, www.richmondhill.ca respectively.

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Citizen:



Most of you know that this is a municipal election year across the Province. The Province has decided that our elections will be held on Monday, October 25th. In Richmond Hill this will be your opportunity to vote for the Mayor, two Regional and Local Councillors, your local Ward Councillor and your School Board Trustee. These are the people who ultimately guide the Town or the School Boards. They make decisions on budgets, by-laws, policies and programs.

You may also decide to run for elected office yourself. If so, you must register with the Clerk's Department (905) 771-8800.

To qualify as a voter or a candidate, you must be a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, you must reside in the Town or own or be a tenant of land in the Town in which you are voting or running for election.

Arts, Culture and our Economy:

York Region and Richmond Hill understand the direct link between encouraging arts and culture and building a strong, local economy. The fact is that well-educated people want to live, work, and play in a vibrant, diverse, expressive community. Richmond Hill is known as having the highest educated residents in the Greater Toronto Area. That is why I am very pleased to report that the Region Arts Council will launch three initiatives in 2010:

The First Annual York Region Arts and Culture Conference
A bursary grant program for artists and,
A state-of-the-art interactive web portal, YorkScene.com

Stay tuned!



With the New Decade people like to make predictions. Predictions are more than entertainment; they typically reflect an extension of our recent past.

Here are some trends and opinions for our New Year

- With the planning of a subway to Yonge and Hwy. 7, we will see more urban development proposals for Richmond Hill, particularly along our Yonge Street corridor. Already Council and Town staffs are reviewing applications for 15 -28 storey towers at several locations along Yonge.
- Richmond Hill will continue to have challenges to protect their limited supply of employment lands (mostly located between Highway 404 and Leslie Street from Highway 7 to Elgin Mills Road).
- Another study on the relocation of the Town Hall is in the works. I expect that Council will make a decision following the next election.
- Community groups will fight any high density development near their neighbourhoods while Council negotiates between the Province's Growth Plan and the residents' concerns. With intensification, pressure will be put upon Council to develop the protected lands of the Oak Ridges Moraine.
- Based on responses to date, the David Dunlap Observatory will NOT receive funding from the Federal or Provincial governments. If you are hoping to change that outcome, please contact your Members of Federal and Provincial Parliament:

M.P. Bryon Wilfert www.bryonwilfert.ca
M.P. Paul Calandra www.paulcalandra.com
M.P.P. Dr. Reza Moridi www.rezamoridi.onmpp.ca
M.P.P. Dr. Helena Jaczek www.helenajaczek.ca

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES



Over the past decade, the FCM has lobbied the Federal government on many issues. As a Director with the Federation for the past 12 years, I am pleased to report some of our major successes.

Due to the lobbying efforts of the Federation, municipalities across Canada now receive a portion of the Federal Gas Tax. Since 2005, Richmond Hill has received almost \$11 million and the Region of York has received over \$47 million from this fund alone (calculated to the end of 2010). Richmond Hill will be using Gas Tax Funds to upgrade our heating systems, add to our solar heating systems, and implement energy conservation programs at public facilities across the Town. Almost \$1.7 million has been approved in this year's Town budget for environmentally sustainable projects.

Infrastructure funds from the Federal and Provincial governments have been received by Richmond Hill in the amount of over \$24 million. These funds will be used to create jobs through rebuilding roads; restoring two historic homes to protect our heritage; and encouraging more physical activity by rehabilitating the Elgin Barrow Arena, the Bond Lake Arena, by building a Town-wide cycling path, among other projects.