

**From:** howard doughty

**Sent:** Sunday, May 25, 2025 3:40 PM

**To:** Clerks Richmondhill <[clerks@richmondhill.ca](mailto:clerks@richmondhill.ca)>

**Cc:** Carol Davidson <[carol.davidson@richmondhill.ca](mailto:carol.davidson@richmondhill.ca)>

**Subject:** Request for Comments – Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications – 0 Longworth Avenue

Good day,

I am writing in opposition to Centerfield Properties application to build two 5-storey buildings on a currently empty lot that is zoned for small commercial buildings. The two proposed buildings would include 201 apartment units, 371 parking spaces, Indoor and rooftop outdoor spaces for residents with an underground garage and shops or businesses on the ground floor.

It is my understanding that:

- the proposed five (5) storey high density, mid-rise mixed-use residential/commercial are currently disallowed within buildings within the Neighbourhood Commercial area of the West Gormley Secondary Plan;
- no affordable housing units included, though 10% of apartments would have 3 bedrooms;
- the subject lands are not located within a strategic growth area;
- the subject lands are within an area of High Aquifer Vulnerability;
- city staff have raised some concerns that the development may be too tall and dense for this location and that waste, water, parking, and environmental issues (due to the area's sensitive groundwater) need a more detailed planning report.

As part of the city staff's effort to gather feedback from residents, council, and outside agencies, I respectfully wish to add these comments.

Although I am not a resident of the immediate area, I am a resident of Richmond Hill and of Ward 1 within it.

I have lived here for over 40 years and, almost from the beginning, I have witnessed multiple instances of poorly regulated residential growth in defiance of concern for the sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine and the City's expressed concern for professional planning standards. Of late, these exercises in profit-motivated intensification have increased under the anti-democratic initiatives of the current provincial government.

As Council members present and past (dating back to the late 1980s) will be aware, I have joined and occasionally led residents' efforts to ameliorate, moderate, regulate, stop (where possible), and make the case to reverse too many of these development proposals to recount. Almost all such efforts have failed with the result that a precarious land area once claimed to be able to sustain a human population of no more than 6,000 people has seen those numbers balloon by a factor or ten ... and show no sign of stopping.

From the passive false assertion that "you can't stop progress" to the active false charge that these community-based objections are just selfish "NIMBY" claims and on to the lamentation that the City is powerless to control growth because of the anti-democratic impulses of the current premier, I have been disheartened by the response of Council after Council.

I do, however, believe that even in a situation of practical futility, there remains a strategy more ennobling than a pre-emptive cringe and the dwindling but still available possibility that an occasional victory may be won. In this case, as in the Snively proposal that brought me to speak in person some weeks ago, I refuse to yield prematurely and to abandon all hope.

I would also like to state the case that it is necessary, if we are to take our collective legacy seriously and live up to our responsibility to do what we can to limit the damage we do during our short period of stewardship over the land we are now despoiling, to rethink our entire approach to growth - of which we have *known* there to be limits at least since the publication of *The Limits to Growth* in 1972 <<https://ia802201.us.archive.org/9/items/TheLimitsToGrowth/TheLimitsToGrowth.pdf>>, never mind the ill-fated "Brundtland Report" in 1987 <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>>, and all the other signs of warning that have proliferated, been hypocritically afforded lip-service, and then deflected, deformed, or merely ignored ever since.

The problem, of course, is that the planning process needs to be turned upside down. Instead of leaving planning to the manipulated marketplace and allowing for-profit developers to dictate the nature and direction of housing, it is the responsibility of government - in whatever federal, provincial, or municipal array of authority prevails at any given time - to set the plans, goals, and standards and not only to set the rules, the limits, and the expectations for building, but also through public housing initiatives, to take an active role not just in planning, but in construction, and administration as well.

I have no special access to the deliberations currently under way in the upper ethers of decision making, but I am led to believe that the current "housing crisis" is of sufficient concern that it has provoked some talk of a rejuvenation of the long-languishing Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and/or other public agencies that have to potential to challenge and reverse the domination of the neoliberal market model that has eviscerated education, health care, public transit, and other essential services (today including the post office) and, of course, *HOUSING*.

I confess that I cannot comment more specifically for the simple reason that I and others among your constituents lack access to the detailed organizational, legal, financial, and constitutional expertise that would be necessary to create a thorough analysis and to generate a detailed plan for the future. Indeed, it is possible that this Council, too, has limited access to such expertise beyond the limits of this municipality or, perhaps, York Region.

What it does not lack in the capacity to join with others, to press the province and the federal governments to turn away from the for-profit development industry and to move expeditiously toward a coordinated, common (and *genuinely* "common-sense" approach that will see our elected representatives at all levels do what the current prime minister has promised; namely, to put Canada on the equivalent of a "war-time" footing to solve the housing (and potentially the other interrelated *crises*) that have so far generated mainly sanctimonious platitudes and degrading, reciprocal, and uniformly witless insults across ideological and factional divides.

*I have some hope* that the development proposal under review here will be rejected.

*I choose to believe* (all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding) that you will give some creative thought and dedicated energy to the whole disease and not merely one of its many *symptoms*.

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