



October 13, 2009

Mayor Frank Scarpitti and  
All Members of Council  
Town of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario  
L3R 9W3

Dear Mayor Scarpitti and Members of Council:

RE: Land Use Review for Victoria Square

My name is Elena Bevilacqua and our company, Cesaroni, owns three properties in the Hamlet of Victoria Square.

When we purchased these lands we saw a dwelling for an important community project we wanted to launch. We saw the heritage cottage as a home for a family resource centre and a small, specialized parenting book store. A place where a family could go to get resources to support the many parenting challenges families are facing today. We saw a private practice by a regulated health professional and we saw new construction that would house complementary medical and professional offices.

We understood that the current official plan does provide for a mix of uses in the Hamlet and that the uses we are contemplating are permitted. We understood that the Hamlet is the type of community where any new development would only be successful if the developers had a clear understanding of the stakeholders and their needs and concerns. To this end, we made every attempt to reach out to all the stakeholders – we met with the President and Vice-President of the Save Victoria Square Ratepayers Association, we met with the local councilor Dan Horchik, we met with town staff and we met with heritage staff. We were careful to craft our project with an understanding of all the information we had gathered.

We took the concerns of residents seriously and planned for a building that had garbage stored inside – not in a commercial dumpster that would be an eyesore. We planned for shielded lighting and a very generous landscaped border so as not to disturb our neighbours. We worked closely with heritage to develop a plan to restore the historic cottage on the property. We designed a building with a generous set back and in an architectural style that addresses the specific design criteria town staff believes will preserve the historic integrity of the Hamlet

We met with town staff and had our pre-consultation meeting. However, we were told that it might be diligent for us to delay the filing of our formal application until the land use study undertaken by staff on council's initiative was complete.

We carefully followed the progress of the land use study and participated at every possible step. We noted that 15 residents responded to staff's questionnaire and that 7 of these people supported a mix of uses in the Hamlet. We noted that the staff recommendation was generally supported by many of the residents we spoke with privately from the Hamlet.

We also noted that after the June 16 public meeting of the Development Services Committee – the Committee advised that staff “will continue to work with the ward councillor and community to further refine the permitted uses”. At no time was it recommended that staff should be considering an absolute ban on non-residential uses.

We also noted that the recent petition filed with Council may have 30 respondents who do not support staff's present recommendation of mixed uses – but that 8 of these people also do not support a recommendation restricting the Hamlet to just residential uses. This suggests that only 22 families out of the approximately 100 properties in the Hamlet support the official plan amendment restricting uses to solely residential. In our view, this is not an overwhelming vote of confidence.

We support the official plan amendment recommended by town staff which suggests a further restriction of non-residential uses in the Hamlet than is presently provided for. Staff's report provides for non-residential opportunities limited to the key areas fronting onto Elgin Mills Road East and Woodbine Avenue.

This makes good planning sense as this is the crossroads of the community.

It is appropriate to allow non-residential uses here as Hamlets originally functioned as gathering places with a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses. What is not appropriate is taking an extreme step at this point in time that bans all non-residential uses from the Hamlet.

There has been discussion of the present land uses in the Hamlet and while it is true that it has been primarily residential in recent history, it cannot be ignored that non-residential uses have been allowed and that many businesses have called the Hamlet home in past years. In fact, a thriving business is still an important part of the Hamlet today.

There has also been discussion about the new businesses which have been established around the Hamlet. However, what has been ignored is the important contribution that main street businesses make that these big box businesses do not.

How can we ignore the appeal of a business that you can walk to rather than getting into your car for? How can we ignore the benefit of having services on our main street that allow a family to access doctors, family education resources and other professionals in a more intimate and personal setting? Do these types of non-residential uses not lend themselves to the sense of community and identity of the Hamlet? Do these types of uses not strike a balance between the restriction of uses and property owners' rights?

Our belief is that what council is proposing to adopt today actually takes a big step back in planning for the future of the Hamlet. If this resolution is passed tonight, Markham Council will be restricting a land use which has been historically part of the official plan Hamlet policy and a type of use which is beneficial to and compliments the Hamlet and its residents.

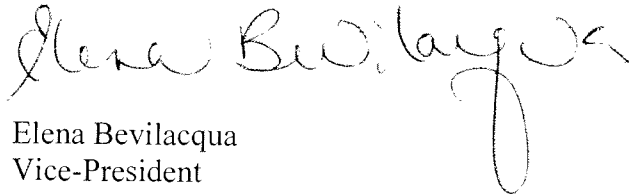
We ask that Council considers voting against this resolution.

However, I would also ask that if council cannot vote against the resolution, at the very least the whole matter should be deferred as this resolution will have the effect of imposing a very extreme restriction, one that has serious repercussions and one that has not been properly considered by staff, the community or council.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

**CESARONI HOLDINGS LIMITED**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Elena Bevilacqua', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the bottom of the name.

Elena Bevilacqua  
Vice-President

Oct. 11, 2009

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is in support of the original plan to re-zone the land in Victoria Square in Markham as commercial. This action will serve to accredit this area as one that is charming and unique.

Rapid change of increased residential areas threaten that Victoria Square be drowned out by thousands of homes. It would be a shame to have this quaint area fade into the new urban sprawl when the action to re-zone could be the best step in preserving the areas identity as a highlight to the community.

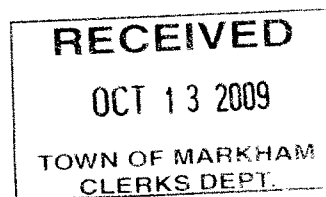
Previous town meetings addressed the possibility of turning Victoria Square into a small community with local shops. This action would not only give this area its own identity and improve and encourage new relationships within the community. It will also outline not only what is historically significant but what will not be lost in the future as a result of urbanization.

As a resident of Victoria Square I must express my concern for the preservation of this charming hamlet. I strongly support the original plan to include commercial zoning in this area.

Thank you,

Community member

A. FEDELE



J.H.