

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC HEARING) SEPTEMBER 2, 2003

**1. ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT FILE Z.03.051 (RELATED FILE 15.93)
CITY OF VAUGHAN - THORNTRIDGE DRIVE LAND USE REVIEW
PRELIMINARY REPORT**

P.2003.56

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the Public Hearing for File Z.03.051 (City of Vaughan - Thornridge Drive Land Use Review) BE RECEIVED, and that any issues identified be addressed by Staff in a comprehensive report to the Committee of the Whole.

Purpose

On June 23, 2003, Council directed Staff to commence a review of the By-law 1-88 zone standards for institutional uses, applicable to the lands on Thornridge Drive, west of Charles Street (Attachment '1'), and to report back to the September 2, 2003 Public Hearing on the merits of amending the By-law.

Background - Analysis and Options

The subject lands are located southwest of Centre Street and Yonge Street, being 3 to 77 (odd municipal addresses only) Helena Gardens, 18 and 70 Charles Street, 122 to 148 Thornridge Drive, and 311 Franklin Avenue, as identified on Attachment '1'.

On April 9, 2003, the Community Planning Department held a community meeting with the Local Councillor and area residents to discuss the challenges and issues associated with the current land use policies, and to explore the residents' concerns that have been brought to the City's attention. The following concerns were raised at the community meeting respecting the land use change at 148 Thornridge Drive:

- the use compromises the residential character of the neighbourhood;
- it is an established pocket of quiet residential uses with higher intensity uses being introduced, straining the area's infrastructure;
- there is potential for the school to expand on-site and through acquisition of the adjacent properties;
- there are safety concerns (traffic, speeding, drop-off/pick-up congestion) that have arisen since the school opened;
- there has been increased and excessive strain on the City's park system since the school opened;
- the diesel buses are very disruptive to day-to-day routines; buses are being stored on-site overnight, and the buses are being started and idling prior to 7:00 am with the buses then returning late in the evening, sometimes after 9:00 pm;
- there are environmental concerns (increased air pollution, noise pollution, and litter) that have arisen since the school opened; and,
- generally, and as a result of the above-noted concerns, the overall quality of life for the community has been negatively impacted.

On May 29, 2003, the Community Planning Department held a second community meeting with the Local Councillor and area residents to present the results of the land use review to date, including recommendations pursuant to the Planning Act to ensure the character of this residential neighbourhood is maintained. The area residents again expressed the concerns that were raised at the first community meeting.

On August 8, 2003, a notice of public hearing was circulated to all property owners within the area bounded by Centre Street to the north, Yonge Street to the east, Clark Avenue to the south, and Atkinson Avenue to the west. To date, Staff has received numerous phone calls expressing similar concerns as raised at the two community meetings. More specifically, the area residents wish to protect the residential character of this area, and are extremely concerned that should the school have an opportunity to expand either on-site or by acquiring adjacent lands, the problems that have been identified will escalate.

Any additional comments received will be addressed in the technical review and included in a comprehensive Staff report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Preliminary Review

Following a preliminary review to amend the By-law 1-88 zone standards for institutional uses, applicable to those lands as identified on Attachment '1', Staff has identified the following matters to be reviewed in further detail:

Minimum/Maximum Lot Area Requirements

The lands within the study area have varying lot areas, frontages, and depths. By-law 1-88 states that the minimum lot area for an R1 Zone (the residential lots fronting on Helena Gardens) shall be 540m² (5,812.7sq.ft.), and that the minimum lot area for an R1V Zone (the residential lots on Thornridge Drive) shall be 845m² (9,095.8sq.ft.), with no minimum lot area for institutional uses (i.e. places of worship, public and/or private schools). By-law 1-88 does not require a maximum lot area for either the residential or institutional uses within the study area.

The private school that currently occupies 148 Thornridge Drive has a lot area of 4,155m² (44,730.0sq.ft.), which is one of the largest lots in the study area.

Residents are concerned with the potential for the private school at 148 Thornridge Drive to expand on-site and/or through acquisition of the adjacent properties. Amending By-law 1-88 to provide a maximum lot area of 4,155m² (0.4ha) for institutional uses would limit the potential for the existing private school to acquire the adjacent lands and merging the lands on title to make one parcel. However, the said amendment would not restrict an institutional use from potentially purchasing and occupying a property under separate ownership.

To address the residents concerns — by recognizing the potential expansion of the school site, which could result in a scale of development that is out of context with the residential neighbourhood — an amendment to By-law 1-88 for the lands within the study area would be required to first, provide a maximum lot area of 0.4ha for institutional uses, and second, to restrict institutional uses from being permitted on the R1 and R1V Zoned lands within the study area.

Maximum Gross Floor Area (including building height) Requirements

The institutional zone standards in By-law 1-88 require a maximum building height of 11metres (36ft.) and maximum lot coverage of 20%. The maximum building height for the R1 and R1V residential zones is 9.5metres (31ft.), with no maximum lot coverage requirement.

The private school that currently occupies 148 Thornridge Drive has a building footprint of 662m², or 15.9% lot coverage (662m²/4,155m² = 15.9%), and a building height of 11metres. The total gross floor area of the building (ground floor + mezzanine) is 1011m² (10,883sq.ft.).

There is no maximum gross floor area requirement for institutional uses, however building envelopes are controlled by the lot coverage, setback, building height, and parking requirements. Generally, and based on the development control tools as identified above, the building currently occupying 148 Thornridge Drive is at its maximum building area.

Any proposed additions to the existing private school would require the Owner to submit a Site Development Application, to be approved by Council.

Outdoor Storage Area Requirements

By-law 1-88 states that for lands zoned residential, “no commercial vehicle shall be parked or stored on a residential lot, unless that lot is being actively prepared for or undergoing construction for which the equipment is intended, or unless said vehicle is parked in a wholly enclosed building”.

The private school located at 148 Thornridge Drive is zoned A Agricultural Zone, which has no restrictions regarding the storage of commercial vehicles, and as such, permits buses to park on-site overnight. It is noted that a typical agricultural zoned property has a minimum lot frontage of 100m and a minimum lot area of 10ha, which provides a surplus of land to accommodate the storage of vehicles, farm equipment, etc. without impacting on adjacent residents.

Residents are concerned with the diesel buses that are parking on-site overnight, and being started and idling prior to 7:00 am, then returning late in the evening, sometimes after 9:00 pm. In addition, the numerous buses being stored on-site overnight are visually unattractive and not in keeping with the residential character of this neighbourhood.

To address the residents concerns — to secure the integrity of the streetscape and recognize the residential character of the neighbourhood — an amendment to By-law 1-88 for the lands within the study area would be required to restrict commercial vehicles, including school buses, from being parked and/or stored on a lot.

On-site Amenity Space (Play Space) Requirements

There is no City or Ministry of Education requirement to provide on-site amenity space (play space) for children attending public, separate, or private schools.

There is currently very little ‘green’ play space on the private school at 148 Thornridge Drive, and as a result, the children attending the school are using the adjacent park during recess, resulting in increased and excessive strain on the park system.

To address the residents concerns — to maintain the viability of the existing park system — an amendment to By-law 1-88 for the lands within the study area would be required to provide a minimum amount of ‘green’ play space on the private school lands.

Additional Concerns

In addition to the above, the residents have brought forward numerous safety concerns (traffic, speeding, drop-off/pick-up congestion, buses rolling through the stop signs) that have arisen since the school opened.

Staff is of the opinion the above-noted concerns cannot be addressed through the City’s Zoning By-law.

Conclusion

It is evident from the strong turn-out at the community meetings and the numerous phone calls received by Staff, that the area residents are concerned with the future of their neighbourhood, specifically with respect to maintaining the residential character and overall quality of life.

The above-noted issues, but not limited to, will be considered in the technical review of the land use study, together with comments expressed at the public hearing or in writing, and will be addressed in a comprehensive report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

In particular, the study will include a review of the institutional zone standards in By-law 1-88 pertaining to minimum/maximum lot area requirements, outdoor storage requirements, and green play space requirements.

Should the Committee concur, the recommendation in this report can be adopted.

Attachments

1. Location Map

Report prepared by:

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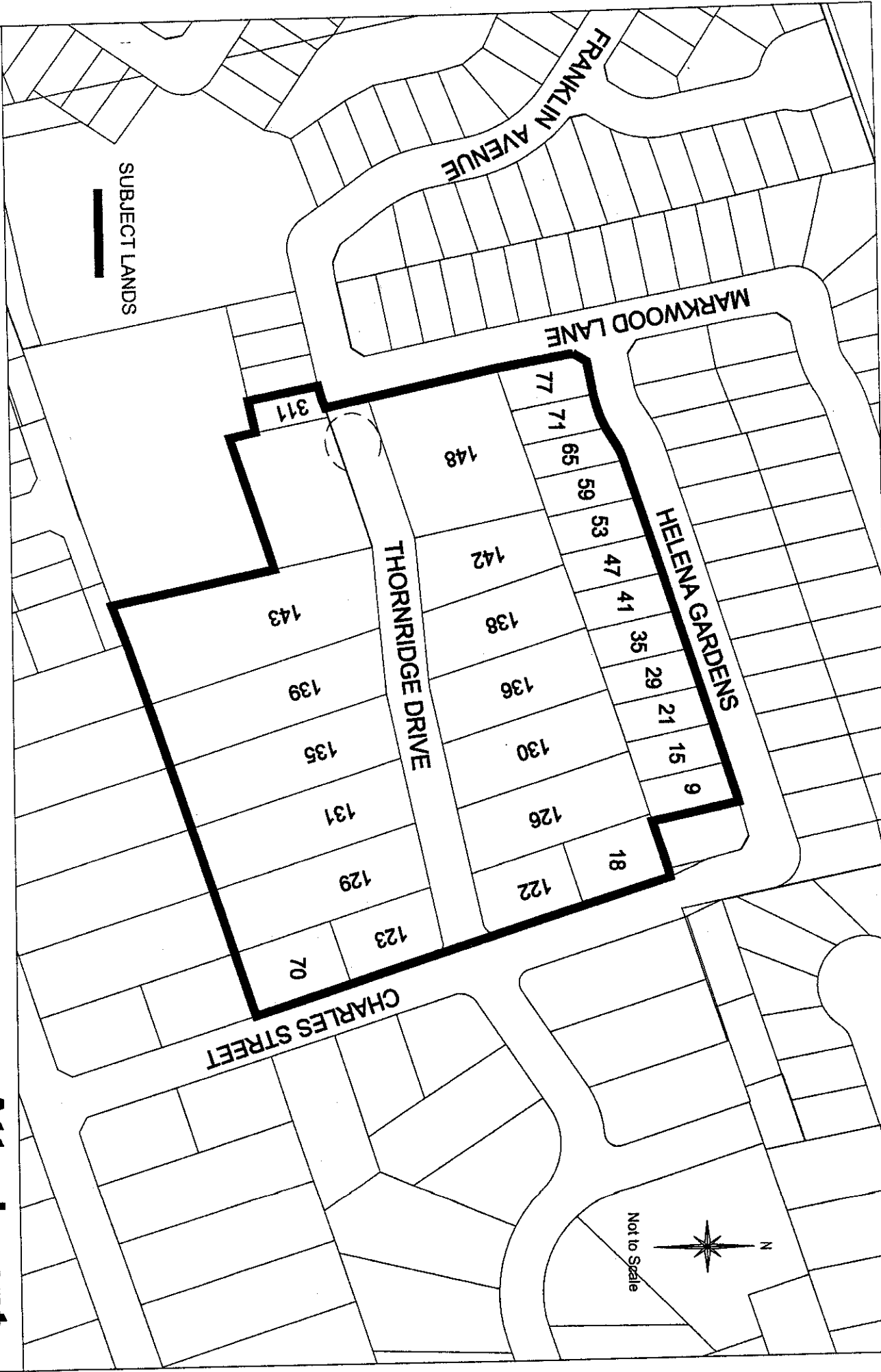
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Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL DeANGELIS
Commissioner of Planning

JOANNE R. ARBOUR
Director of Community Planning

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**Thornridge Drive Land
Use Review Area**

Part of Lot 30,
Concession 1



Community Planning Department

Attachment

FILE No.:
Z.03.051
RELATED FILE:
15.93

August 20, 2003

