

Newmarket Council,

Is 'Newmarket - Well Beyond the Ordinary' just a slogan, merely aspirational or something actually achievable? You have to decide.

Here is what is ordinary: taking a greenfield space (designated as part of the environmentally protected Oak Ridges Moraine) and turning it into a low-density, high cost housing development that furthers suburban sprawl. Nothing innovative, creative or beyond the ordinary with this decision.

Meanwhile the climate crisis continues, the federal government committed to protecting 30% of Canada's landmass from development (it can't all be in Nunavut) and Newmarket misses a chance to be a champion in sustainable communities and contributing to the broader Canadian and global effort to help address the climate crisis and heal the planet. The protected designation of this parcel of land was done for a very good reason. That reason has not changed, yet as the provincial government loosens restrictions to protect environmentally important lands in contrast to global requirements to expand protection of environmentally important lands, Newmarket council is considering supporting the diminishment of such lands under its jurisdiction. Everyone has to step up and municipalities can be leading change agents for climate crisis action.

Newmarket Council has to decide where it stands in addressing climate change and global warming. Can it go well beyond the ordinary and become a leader in creating environmental sustainable thinking and practice?

So clearly we are not in favour of supporting the Shining Hill development proposal. However, as Canada is the shining example of mutual accommodation there may be alternatives to consider. We have seen a suggestion that limits all development to five hectares, putting all the housing units in a high-density development (which would also provide some lower cost alternatives to young adults starting out or senior adults winding down). This development could occur along the Yonge St corridor where a significantly underutilized transit system exists. There can be many creative responses to get the density and leverage existing infrastructure, leaving the bulk of the property as open/wild space, you just have to get past the ordinary.

Newmarket council has a choice. Let it be informed by its motto. Otherwise get rid of the motto. As the timelines for addressing the climate crisis get shorter, citizens will become more demanding of their governments. As the 2022 municipal elections approach, Newmarket citizens will be looking for a council that can demonstrate it understands its environmental responsibilities and is thoughtful and creative in its responses. Why not aspire to and become the most environmentally sustainable community in Ontario/Canada.

This is not a time for Ordinary. This is a time for Extraordinary.

Thank you for allowing input into your decision-making.

Russ & Jennie Coles