



Richmond Hill Naturalists

Chair James Young and Committee Members
Planning & Economic Development
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

November 25, 2009

Dear Chair Young and Committee Members,

RE: The David Dunlap Observatory & Park

We are long-term residents of York Region, and have been active community service members, since our club's inception in 1955. Our group remains actively & continuously involved improving southern York Region, through tree planting, education, restoration and participating in planning and environmental assessments.

Our research on this Park has confirmed that it was dedicated and accepted by the Province and Federal governments as a memorial to the late David Dunlap and "park for the citizens". The University of Toronto for the past 20 years has tried to change the deed. In 2003, the university took the grandchildren of the donor Jessie Dunlap to court for four years and in 2007 settled out of court.

This 189 acre parcel has developed from an open field farm in to a planned natural area and habitat for flora and fauna. Along with community involvement, the Province of Ontario also participated with a large contribution in 1939 of 3100 trees, half native and half non-native. We have altered our community planning to support the University work and enacted the first "dark skies" lighting by-law in Canada. York Region residents have also underwritten their taxes. The University has chosen to retreat to their city campus.

The public has enjoyed and used this park each and every day for the past 73 years. Over time the David Dunlap Park and Observatory has developed into the largest greenspace and forested area in Southern York Region, south of the Moraine, and was once within the Oak Ridges Moraine boundaries and at the same elevation. It is part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Aquifer feeding in to the headwaters of the Don and Rouge Rivers.

This important natural science land form, a drumlin, is part of one of the last remaining open greenspaces in southern York Region. If developed, we will be reducing our forest cover, increasing our footprint, paving over will create nonporous surfaces, a larger heat sink, and will not improve, water, forest cover or wildlife migration.

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Grey infrastructure should not replace this park, an area that in “Places to Grow” will need this green infrastructure to support your incoming citizens. Richmond Hill and Markham Councils have recently passed similar motions and are also asking for Provincial and Federal considerations. We ask that you support the community, York Region's commitment to increasing green infrastructure and the motion before you today.

Thank you,

Marianne Yake
President
Richmond Hill Naturalists

Cc:
Premier McGuinty
Minister of Culture, Hon. Aileen Carroll