

Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association

FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER | WWW.OUNRA.ORG | GUELPH, ON

OUNRA: Facing a Different Future?

From the OUNRA Executive Committee

The pandemic has caused us to re-examine many facets of our lives. The way we work. The way we play. The way we go to school and receive many other services.



It also has been the impetus for self-examination – both for organizations as well as individuals. Such is the case for the Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association. Our Executive Committee has been stepping back and re-examining our mission and purpose.

One of the prime reasons for the birth of OUNRA was the rapid and relentless turning of large sections of our Old University Neighbourhood (OUN) into student rentals purchased by absentee landlords. While students have always been a part of our neighbourhood the balance, it seemed, was tipping and many feared the formation of a student dominated area where families may no longer feel comfortable or welcome. This has happened in other cities such as Waterloo and Ottawa, for example. Those who started the Association a few decades ago worked hard to prevent such a fate for the OUN.

Working with the University and the City, OUNRA has come a long way to addressing unruly behaviour and neighbourhood concerns. Hard work by a succession of Executive Committees over the years has brought significant success. In fact, our strategy of working positively with the University and the City has been a model for other university towns in Ontario.

Now, however, the dynamics driving the evolution of housing forms in the OUN are changing. Currently, high prices in the housing market and an increasing supply of purpose-built student housing have meant that this pressure has receded and even, in a limited way, reversed. Increasingly, families are returning to our streets. We see signs that a healthier mix of residents is becoming established where we see parents with children, seniors and students finding living spaces around us.

So, what are the issues and concerns of the neighbourhood today? What should we be about?

- The high costs of real estate and the lack of affordable housing? Have we an obligation to respond to what is becoming a severe housing shortage in our City?

Continued on back

- Ontario is requiring cities to permit denser housing development; these requirements will soon be reflected in updated zoning bylaws. How should we respond to these changes and to what extent should we resist any changes that will alter the character of the OUN?
- How can we contribute to meeting the city's goals around greenhouse gases and climate change?
- Years ago, OUNRA began commenting on submissions to the City's Committee of Adjustment when we saw absentee landlords try to push the bylaw boundaries in efforts to get more students into their properties. In the last few years, almost all submissions to the C of A have been from homeowners who want to improve their properties. We have found ourselves no longer objecting to applications for minor adjustments. Instead, we have supported more than 95% of them. Should we continue being concerned about C of A submissions?
- Is there still a need to be active on the Town and Gown Committee and on the Homecoming and St Patrick's Day Task Forces operated jointly by the City and the University?
- Over the past 18 months, we have expressed concern to the City over speeding by drivers on OUN streets. Should we continue to press our concerns?
- Should we, as we have done in the past, continue to offer comment on city-wide policy developments that might not have a direct impact on the OUN?



Let us know your concerns. Our hope is that we will be able to take up those issues/concerns in a face-to-face community meeting very soon.

In closing, a practical appeal.

1. Please consider becoming a contributing member to OUNRA, which helps cover our newsletter, and meeting and membership costs. OUNRA's capacity to raise funds through membership fees has been severely curtailed by the pandemic. Payment of \$20 can easily be made on our secure website at www.ounra.org.
2. Using the OUNRA email address (guelphounra@gmail.com), please share your email address with us so we can build a more extensive email network. We promise we won't bombard you with emails – just a few regular updates per year.
3. If you have found something in this newsletter that particularly speaks to you, and you would like to engage, please consider joining the OUNRA Executive. Or if you have other ideas about how to make our community better, we would love to have you as part of this organization. We meet monthly and enjoy working together on behalf of the community.

Thank you very much and we look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in the not-too-distant future.

WHO TO CALL

*** *Noise and nuisance parties***
E.g. loud parties, alcohol on the street. Police non-emergency number 519-824-1212 (either the police or bylaw will be dispatched)

*** *Illegal parking***
Bylaw 519-837-2529

*** *Property issues***
E.g. garbage
Bylaw 519-837-2529

*** *Outdoor fires***
Fire Department 519-763-8111

*** *If you have student neighbours who are continuing to create issues,***
let the Off-Campus Living Office know at neighbourhood@uoguelph.ca



**Learn about OUNRA at www.ounra.org
Facebook @ Guelph Old University Residents' Association
To get involved, please contact John Lawson, President
at 519-222-6199 or guelphounra@gmail.com**