

Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association

OUNRA Annual General Meeting for 2022

October 4 at 7:00 pm

Harcourt United Church, 87 Dean Ave

Meet your Ward 5 candidates

Come to hear their ideas and their answers to your questions

AGM OUNRA BUSINESS MATTERS: President's Report; Treasurer's Report;
Election of Executive Committee Members.

All welcome!

A Changing Neighbourhood

Message From OUNRA President John Lawson

Our neighbourhood continues to change. Small houses are being demolished or being extensively renovated. Lots are being severed. Although not always the case, these kinds of changes can be a good thing and reflect the natural evolution of our urban environment. People come and go and housing styles change.

And this promises to be just the beginning. New bylaws are soon to be passed by City Council as mandated by the provincial government. Semi-detached houses will be allowed in the OUN and similar neighbourhoods; accessory apartments will also be permitted within all existing houses and in backyards. OUNRA has also been approached by people who wish to build an apartment/condo on one of the major arteries that bisect the OUN, which will allow seniors to "age in place". More will likely come.

How Should We as Neighbours Respond to These Changing Conditions?

Often our first response is "No!". We want things to stay the same, and as a result, some say our neighbourhood is classically NIMBY – development and change anywhere else but "not in my backyard". In truth, this is a pretty natural reaction. We chose to live in the OUN because it is such a good place to live: plenty of space; attractive streetscapes; enviable tree cover; nice parks; easy access to the river; close to the city centre. Why spoil it?

However, it is now widely recognized that everywhere we are in a housing crisis. We seriously need more housing of all sorts. And we need it within the current borders of the city



to stop urban sprawl, to stop the loss of agricultural land, and to protect the aquifer that provides our drinking water. Each of us needs to consider ways we might deal with this housing crisis. How do we all have these conversations as a city and with our neighbours? It is not easy.

How Should OUNRA Respond to the Issues?

The Executive Committee of OUNRA (all volunteers) has a particular responsibility to speak out on matters that affect the quality of life for OUN residents. How do we do that? Over the last three decades the Executive has:

- participated in community-wide consultations about planning and zoning decisions
- participated in joint meetings between the City and the University
- joined in appeals before the Land Planning Tribunal (formerly OMB)
- made regular submissions to the Committee of Adjustment (C of A)



Indeed, in the last six months, OUNRA has made three submissions, among others, to the C of A on applications seeking approval of building lots less than the 15 m required by the zoning bylaw. The last application, finally approved by the Committee, was for 12.6 m, a substantial variance in our view. We also raised concerns that small lots combined with large houses will negatively impact the tree canopy at just the time we need to increase it. More generally, our concern is that without a more general discussion and understanding we will continue to see an ad hoc, higgledy-piggledy response. We would like to see zoning changes take place in the open and not behind the closed doors of the C of A.

Other issues continue to be on our radar:

- traffic through our neighbourhood,
- absentee landlords who own multiple properties but, in some cases, do not keep them up, and
- the ongoing nurturing of relationships with the University concerning student housing.

We Need Your Input and Support

We need to be frank. The pandemic has upended many of the ways we have functioned and gathered as a neighbourhood association. It has taken a toll and we need to rebuild this volunteer residents' association.

You Can Help by:

- **Attending a community meeting / AGM at Harcourt United Church on Tuesday, 4 October 2022 at 7 PM.** We're inviting you to meet those candidates who are running in our Ward 5 in the upcoming municipal election in October.
- **Volunteering** to become part of the OUNRA executive. (We meet monthly in person or via Zoom.)
- **Becoming** a contributing member of OUNRA with the annual donation of \$20. *Bring a cheque to the AGM or pay on our secure website at: ounra.org.*

We are always ready to hear your ideas and feedback. We look forward to renewed engagement within our wonderful Old University Neighbourhood.



A Recent Accomplishment

OUNRA has worked to support neighbours and parents who have been urging the City to make the corner of Forest Street and Maple Street a safer place for pedestrians to cross. This is one of the main crossings for students going to John McCrae School. The picture at left is a pilot project in the part of the city to slow down traffic and make the crossing safer. Congratulations to neighbours and concerned parents!

Connect with Us...

We want to hear your perspective on the issues that concern you about our Old University Neighbourhood. Please take the extra step and become a Contributing Member of OUNRA with a \$20 annual contribution. Email us anytime at guelphounra@gmail.com. Visit our website at www.ounra.org. Look us up on Facebook at OUNRA Facebook.