

**Empire Strikes Back—
With a Welcomed Compromise.**

Great news for Ward 2 residents! The conflict over the northeast corner of Kerr Street and Speers Rd. has finally been resolved. Instead of pursuing a lengthy hearing before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), the Town of Oakville has reached a settlement with Empire Communities (Riverstone Residences) regarding their previously proposed condo development.

Empire Communities initially made application for a site specific Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-Law Amendment in May of 2007—calling on the Town to rezone this particular area of Kerr Village. The three proposed high rise complexes were 15, 18 and 21 storeys in height. Councillors Cathy Duddeck and Fred Oliver brought forward a motion to reject the developer's proposal which was passed by Council on Oct.6 of this year. After appealing the matter, Empire had been scheduled to begin an 8-week hearing process before the OMB on Nov. 21, 2008.

Says Chris Kowalchuk, President of the West River Residents Association (WRRRA), “The WRRRA is extremely pleased with this agreement. Our Board members spent countless hours at Town meetings and in discussions with our Councillors and Mayor Rob Burton. We'd especially like to acknowledge the good faith of Empire Communities for coming to an agreement we can all live with—instead of forcing a lengthy and expensive hearing.”

The details of the settlement are as follows:

- Two towers at a maximum height of 14 and 10 storeys vs. three at 21, 18 and 15.
- A maximum of 320 units vs. 536 units.
- Commercial uses at ground level on Speers Rd. and Kerr Street (where feasible) vs. unspecified commercial uses.
- A \$400,000 contribution by Empire to fund streetscape improvements.

- A multi-million dollar payment by Empire to the Town for capital programs such as necessary upgrades to transit facilities.

As this site will now be a gateway marking the entrance to Kerr Village, the design will also include pedestrian-friendly amenities, offer publicly accessible open space, retain the existing heritage buildings and provide underground parking.

Says Kowalchuk, “We look forward to working with Empire to make this development a truly welcoming gateway to our community. And we hope this compromise sets a pattern for other groups facing similar development issues in their neighbourhoods.”

The Town of Oakville is working diligently to determine just how much intensification can occur in the Kerr Village area. As outlined in this settlement, Empire Communities remains free to seek approvals for additional height, density and/or residential units in the future.