

A win is a win, right?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

When is a victory really a victory? Do we consider something a 'win' even if we know some of the potential reasons behind it were not necessarily motivated by a desire to do the right thing? Is it a victory regardless of who claims it? when it at least ensures residents are getting what's needed? What about partial wins? Do we celebrate those? These are the questions I ask myself when MZOs are overturned and crosswalks are installed. Both are quite clearly a 'win' in the eyes of community residents but are they actually a 'win'? You decide.

As I often do, I turn first to the dictionary which defines a win as 'a successful result in a contest or conflict.' Further, a win is 'to succeed in arriving at a place or a state.' By this strict definition, I would suggest that defeating an MZO is a win, for now, but only insofar as this is an ongoing conflict. Similarly, obtaining a much-needed crosswalk in a dangerous, high-volume traffic area is also a win, but in this case, only a temporary win as residents work toward a more ideal level of success. In my mind that is, toward 'arriving at a place or state' where a fully actualized crosswalk with permanent overhead signage and lights exist. Both are wins, but they come with qualifiers.

A recent Council meeting saw an MZO, impacting Ward Two, squashed. Hooray! It's a small but important victory against the wanton (ab)use of these Ministerial Zoning Orders that give far too much leeway to the provincial government to override Town Council input. Residents, most of whom from what I could see don't even reside in Ward Two, spoke out against the MZO impacting a parcel of the greenbelt west of Highway 10 and south of Old School Road. Said parcel of land has had its MZO overturned in what CBC news described as 'an abrupt change in plans.' The province, they write, is now committing that 'the greenbelt lands' remain protected.

Council, and residents, claim a victory and maybe that's the case.

A cynic however, while agreeing to a victory of sorts, wonders if said victory really counts when an embattled Ford government so clearly needed a distraction from all the recent negative press and to claim something like this as a 'win' for themselves. A cynic might ponder how previous MZOs allowed for the development of massive warehousing facilities, paving the way (pun intended) for the housing minister to throw us a bone and promise to protect a small parcel of land that would have been difficult, and no doubt costly, to develop anyway. Finally, a cynic might wonder just what the he** is going on in the Housing Minister's office lately as yet another claim (this time by spokesperson Chris Poulos) suggests that the Minister is unaware of what's going on within his own four walls.

In an email, again quoted by the CBC, Poulos states: 'the ministry received a request for an MZO for the Mayfield West lands in Caledon on June 1, 2023, and, in accordance with the Planning Act, began consulting the public the next month. Through the consultation process it was brought to our attention that the amendment 'as submitted by the proponent' contained a section of lands located within the Greenbelt.' Thank goodness for public consultations and residents expressing concerns or the government might never have known about yet more greenbelt devastation. Thanks also to the residents willing to go out on a limb to share their concerns. A 'victory' of sorts - I guess.

In another claim of victory, the residents of Ward two, (apparently it's your lucky month) are getting a second crosswalk 'this time at a much-needed location in front of a senior's building.

Residents consider it a win, and I'm pretty certain Councillor Dave Sheen does too 'so what does it matter who actually claims the victory as long as it is indeed a victory? Perhaps it doesn't matter that behind the scenes, and in consultation with town traffic planners, negotiations have been ongoing for months and some changes were already being planned for that intersection. Perhaps it doesn't matter that some residents (and to be transparent, a certain opinion columnist) were pushing hard for change when it appears it's likely a crosswalk would have occurred at some point regardless. It's a win for residents no matter what. However, not to rain on

the victory parade, but the real issue is that most of the proposed changes involve painting specifically designed markings on the road. There are already markings on the road and it's a four way stop. Neither appear to be doing anything to actually cause people to come to a complete stop and speeding is an ongoing concern. Worse still, we live in Canada - meaning snow, ice, road salt and snowplow accumulation will render any paint marks, specially designed or not, completely useless for a good portion of the year. What's really needed at Stowmarket and Kennedy Road is a good old-fashioned overhead pedestrian crossing with flashing yellow lights and the whole shebang. One that can be seen from a distance, that pedestrians can activate as needed and that might, just might, make people slow down and stop. Overhead signage and flashing lights (in addition to painted markings) just make common sense in Canada. I'd call this one a draw. It's a positive step forward but not a win, just a win for now. Over to you, Caledon ? you decide.