

# We just want a place to pray, Muslim says

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ple, to turn the house into a mosque to be used by the northern Muslim community.

While the application to secure a final answer will be further discussed at a council committee meeting Feb. 5 at 1:30 p.m., the mosque is operating.

"You can bet your boots it's open and operating," said Mr. Cunningham, who's not the only resident against the move.

"It is with great shock and fear I have recently learned of plans to build a mosque on Mulock Drive under the auspices of Zafar Bangash," Yitzchok Dukesz said in a letter to the editor.

"Let me be clear, I have no problem with a mosque in Newmarket ... however, if, God forbid, it should happen that someone with the types of views of Mr. Bangash is permitted to preach to and educate Newmarket youth, then I would fear for my safety."

Tuesday evening, Muslims attending a prayer session at the Mulock mosque invited an Era-Banner reporter to sit in the back of an auditorium-style room while seven men prayed.

After the prayers, the polite Muslims greeted the reporter.

"We want a place to pray," Adel Shami of Newmarket said. "Before we could come here, I prayed at home or in Toronto. I hope, God willing, will let us stay here."

Mr. Shami, a native of a Muslim country in North Africa, has lived in Canada for 25 years.

"There are about 200 Muslim families in this area," he said.

Mr. Bangash is known for his strong political views; he has compared Israelis to Nazis, stated the Americans are evil and suggested the United States government knew the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were going to be attacked Sept. 11, 2001, but let it happen in order to have a pretext to attack Afghanistan.

"Google this guy. You'll find 15 pages on him," Mr. Cunningham said. "Why is he building a mosque in Newmarket? Where are the Muslims?"

Mr. Bangash, a resident of Markham, regularly writes articles that displayed antipathy toward Israel, questioned who was behind the 9/11 attacks and supports the Islamic Republic of Iran and its founder Ayatollah Khomeini, Mr. Cunningham said.

About five years ago, Mr. Bangash was given a chilly reception when he got involved in a dispute with the York Region board of education about Holocaust education by defending a volunteer who had distributed anti-Semitic material.

Earlier, Mr. Bangash told The Era-Banner his political views have nothing to do with the Newmarket mosque.

JACK  
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