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URA Members Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 09, 2024

Unionville Train Station

URA Directors:

Donna Day, Jóska Zérczi, Michael Gannon, Gene Genin and Peter Miasek

Elected Officials:

Councillor, Reid McAlpine

Attendance: Approximately seventeen members and guests.

1. Call to Order & President's Introduction (Jóska Zérczi)

URA President, Jóska Zérczi, called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Jóska welcomed members, officials, and guests.

2. Membership Matters (Donna Day)

No membership reports were presented.

3. URA Board of Director Candidate – Stella Yu

President, Jóska Zérczi introduced board candidate, Stella Yu. Ms. Yu presented her background and rationale for seeking to join the URA's leadership.

To maintain board composition, at November's Annual General Meeting (AGM), membership approved a motion to allow open board positions to be filled throughout the year instead of once per year. This change is restricted to fiscal 2024.

A vote by members on Ms. Yu candidacy will be taken at the next meeting.

4. Councillor Update (Reid McAlpine)

Ward 3 Councillor, Reid McAlpine then provided comprehensive updates on the following topics:

- Markville Mall redevelopment: Public meeting is scheduled for January 25th to review Cadillac Fairview's proposal and proposed Markville Secondary Plan.
- Hilton Hotel redevelopment: City staff submitted a recommendation that differed substantially from the recommended concept in the Markham Centre Secondary Plan. The discrepancy will be reviewed at an upcoming Unionville Subcommittee meeting.
- No Frills redevelopment: Councillor McAlpine's conflict of interest has been settled so he will be able to fully participate in council decision making with respect to this proposal.
- Canada Computers' old site redevelopment: The developer plans to build townhomes instead of single dwellings on the property.
- Shell Gas Station redevelopment: nothing officially submitted at this time.
- Normandale old farm site: The city is waiting for information from the developer. Heritage home restoration continuing.
- City budget: Mayor is planning to use the expanded powers bestowed by the province to reduce the amount of consultation and number of votes needed pass the budget.
- Main St and Hwy 7 gas station site: Since the site is contaminated and located in floodplain Councillor McAlpine will recommend that the City acquire the property.
- Traffic cameras: The City is looking to expand the use of traffic cameras.
- Community Centers: In the new urban area, the City is considering building smaller community centers. This is partly in response to the elimination of development charges which, in the past, covered the construction of community centers.
- Affordable housing: Affordable housing is negotiated on an individual development basis. Currently the development planned for Warden and Hwy. 7 and Markville Mall include purpose-built rental units.
- Federal Housing Accelerator Fund: Federal funding is conditional on allowing fourplex construction on any suitable property. Markham current by-laws allow for triplex construction. Negotiations between the City and Feds continue.
- Main Street Unionville reconstruction: Council is scheduled to approve funding. The current plan has construction starting in the fall of 2024 and continuing into 2025.
- York University housing: Currently the City has no plans regarding student housing. Councillor McAlpin is planning to meet with the City's Director of Planning to review building options and by-laws related to rooming houses.

5. Committee Reports & Focus Topics

a. York Downs (Mike Gannon)

Mike advised that a minor change to the number and mix of units to be built in the East section, required a brand-new Zoning By Law Application (ZBA) submission. The submission, however, failed to trigger the required notifications to all the Party's in the 2019 Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) approval notice. This OLT notice outlined many terms and conditions of the settlement. In addition, settlement agreements are in place between the URA and the developer. Mike happened to be notified because his residence is within two hundred meters of York Downs (YD).

The URA's immediate concern is related to the status of all the conditions, given that this is being treated as a brand-new application. After helpful input from City staff, here is what is happening:

- All the conditions from the original approval will also be attached, by City staff, to any approval for this new ZBA.
- There is no formal OLT process to notify Partys of a new application, overriding one already agreed to. Councillor McAlpine has asked City staff to come with a process for ensuring such notifications are not missed.
- There have been three other changes approved so far for YD, they are minor "redlining" changes and did not trigger a new ZBA.
- Some key traffic reports have been submitted, as required by the agreements to allow phases to continue to be developed. Peter Miasek is looking into further traffic-related matters that should also have been completed.
- In 2019 we had an agreement with the Region that any road widening of 16th Avenue to the North of the Normandale enclave would take whatever extra land was required from YD and not from the south side of 16th Avenue. We are awaiting status on this item.
- There is a public information meeting planned as part of the approval process for the new ZBA at 7:00pm on January 30th. Mike will likely be deputing on behalf of the URA.

b. MappiT Demo (Jóska Zérczi)

- Last year Markham deployed software, called MappiT, that geospatially shows the location and status of building applications and tree removal permits. The application is available to the public at:
<https://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/home/business/planning/sa-MappiT>

6. New Business

a. Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade (Jóska Zérczi)

President, Jóska Zérczi presented an update on issues with the pedestrian crossing located at Village Parkway and Landmark Court. Since it is difficult for drivers to see the crossing signage at night, a request is being prepared to have the City add flashing lights to the crossing side posts.

b. 2024 Topics (Jóska Zérczi)

To help with planning, URA president, Jóska Zérczi, lead a discussion with the attendees on what should the URA focus on for 2024. Members posed the following questions:

- Should community, safety and citizen wellbeing be prioritized over development topics?
- What issues can the URA influence?
- How can the URA contribute to making Unionville special again?
- Should more focus be directed to community engagement and less effort spent on development issues?
- What processes does the City use to make development and investment decisions?

- What role can the URA play in shedding light on the City's decision-making process?

Longstanding members also shared their insights on where the URA has been effective and what it took to succeed. A key takeaway was focus and perseverance. An example provided was the ten years of lobbying it took to get Metrolinx to stop using the train horn at crossings such as Main Street.

7. Meeting Adjournment

President, Jóska Zérczi adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm.