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URA Members Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 05, 2025

Unionville Presbyterian Church

URA Directors:

Jóska Zérczi, Michael Gannon, Roland Hosein, Peter Miasek, Stella Yu, Mary Caporusso, Adam Poon, and Gene Genin

Elected Officials:

Frank Scarpitti, Mayor, City of Markham

Reid McAlpine, Councillor Ward 3, City of Markham

Attendance: Approximately twenty-eight members and guests.

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

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

2. Mayor's Annual Message to the URA Members (Frank Scarpitti, Mayor, City of Markham)

In his annual update, Mayor Scarpitti discussed growth rates, planning and development approvals, and shared insights on projects like Markham Centre and the Markville Mall redevelopment.

Background

Ontario municipal land use relies on two main plans. The Official Plan sets broad goals for growth, development, and resource protection across a municipality. Secondary Plans provide detailed land use guidelines for specific areas, act as amendments to the Official Plan, and require provincial approval. Developers exploit incomplete and out-of-date official and secondary plans as a way to exceed density, building height and parkland requirements.

a. Markham Centre Development

Markham Centre plans for 72,000 residential units; 11,000 have been built and 48,000 are in approval stages. Delays in setting Highway 407 corridor boundaries have moved Secondary Plan completion to the end of 2025. These delays, along with slowing condo sales, suggest the remaining 61,000 units may take decades to complete.

b. Markville Secondary Plan

The Markville secondary plan projects 28,000 new residents and 8,000 jobs for the Markville Mall and Bullock Road areas. Cadillac-Fairview (CF), the owner of Markville Mall, is seeking to build condos on the parking pad surrounding the mall. To speed up planning approvals CF submitted a hearing request

with the Ontario Land Tribunal. This step forces Markham to respond within 120 days. To enhance building aesthetics, a consultant hired by Markham suggested adding podiums to soften heights.

c. Affordable Housing

Markham will receive \$58.8M from the federal government to accelerate 1,640 housing units over three years. The plan begins with the construction of 800 rental units on 14th Ave near the Aaniin Community Centre. 164 of the units will be rented at below-market rates.

d. York Region's Role in Municipal Planning

In July 2024, Bill 23 shifted York Region's land planning authority to the province to speed up decisions. However, since this change does not address the root causes of delays, the mayor is concerned that approvals for infrastructure items, like sewers and water mains, may take even longer.

3. Councillor Update (Reid McAlpine)

The agenda item was deferred.

4. New Business

The agenda item was deferred.

5. Meeting Adjournment

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