

After several months of careful research and due diligence into the proposed MSECC by a sub committee of the URA (Unionville Ratepayers Association), including an on-line survey of all members,

171 responses, 70 plus write in comments,

the many public meetings, both City organised and URA organised,

Bye the way, thanks for the extraordinary effort by mayor, council and staff put into the many public meetings.

the URA has taken an official position on the matter, overwhelmingly supported at a members meeting on November 19th 2012, as follows;
"The Unionville Ratepayers Association is strongly opposed to any involvement by the City of Markham in the ownership, development, and financing of the Markham Sports Entertainment and Cultural Centre (MSECC)."

Just to pick 3 key points out of the many influencing points,

- For many reasons the Arena and/or team owners get into difficulty and we the taxpayers get left holding the bag
- The murky issue of those voluntary development charges
- Insufficient due diligence on the partners

We are fortunate to have a highly educated population, Many residents with hands on experience of public private partnerships etc etc

With respect to the MSECC site plan still under consideration by the City, we understand that there is a process that has to be followed if a properly presented site plan is submitted to the City for a properly zoned site. We also understand that if approval of the MSECC financial framework is rescinded, the current site plan report would need to be

amended, as site plan approval is currently tied to an approved financial framework.

Some members might indeed like having an Arena, and some might like having an NHL team to go with it, but the real work has yet to be published on the site plan. Yes, there are lot of marketing slides, on some moving targets like the amount of parking required, but the report before you today is mostly about delegating approval of future work to be done, to staff. Thanks to Deputy Mayor Heath for asking that publicly funded infrastructure must come back to council for approval.

There are several questions that need answers before signing up for an privately funded Arena.

- Even privately funded, could it be a white elephant. NHL monopoly, it's a lottery, we lose, then what? Have we lost an opportunity to better develop that site?
- Should it be south of the 407 from a traffic perspective?
- Is any additional public infrastructure needed.? What are the costs of that, and the costs of bringing forward any currently in plan.
- Would a University, or perhaps offices be better? Both from economic development as well as transit points of view.
- What about transit? Arenas are event driving from a transit perspective, leading to gridlock at event times. Universities, offices, tend to need transit spread out over the day, hence making it much easier to invest in, and get people to use, transit.

Given the fluidity of the situation we have not taken an official position on the current site plan report but are concerned that any site plan should be developed and approved within a good planning context.

To that end the URA official position is as follows;
"The URA supports expediting the Markham Centre Secondary Plan".

Personal note, at the Oct 24th meeting, the audio record is now available