

Your worship, members of Council, City Staff and residents. I would first like to express thanks to those Council members who, after the vote on the financial framework on April 26th, have gladly given their time to listen to the many comments from residents. The same goes for all the staff who have also graciously given their time to help us understand this proposal. Thank you all.

Despite all this dialogue, and the many dog and pony shows, there has been very little new information of any real substance. Too much dogging it, and not enough poneying up of new information and certainly no indication of any intention to change the financial framework! Yes transparency, sadly lacking to date, has at last been recognised as being required and is a big step forward, thank you for your worship's announcement this week. But without a commitment to change, the financial risks to residents still remain.

Let me give the highlights.

1. Who pays if the operators bail out on us? Declare bankruptcy perhaps because they fail to secure the NHL team that, lets be honest here, is essential for the commercial success of this venture? And we need a commercial success so that residents can pay off their half of this loan right?
2. Are the voluntary development charges legal? What happens if developers want their money back? Perhaps because one or more of them has some difficulty with a future application? "Hey come on, I paid my arena levy, why are you giving me a

hard time, give me a break?" We have been debating this for 6 months now, why no clear answer already on the DCs question?

3. Is Mr Rouston an appropriate partner? If the press is to be believed that is a very good question, and please, "no more about he is listed on the TSX". How about Sino Forest, Nortel Networks, Bre Ex??? That does not represent due diligence!

So, we must assume the same financial risks to taxpayers will remain. Sir, if you insist on having an Arena, we do not want those risks, please find a better way of financing it, make it entirely private sector, or perhaps a fixed subsidy, but eliminate the risks to taxpayers!

Moving on to the planning issues, the planning report that was tabled yesterday, is clearly not the way to go about planning for the Arena. Perhaps it is the time pressure on staff, or perhaps other pressures, have led to this. If I have understood the document properly, the only item that need come back to council or DSC, and hence public scrutiny, is the financial framework. All the other critical items, roads, traffic, transit, parking etc etc are delegated to staff to approve on a case by case basis, and need never see the light of day again, as long as council has approved a financial framework! Well, that was done on April 26th!! The planning report does not call for a new financial framework, simply an approved one. Result, millions of dollars can now be spent without further public scrutiny or council oversight?? Hopefully this is not the real intent?

And, its cart before the horse. How can you have a sensible planning discussion without an agreed financial plan as a context?? You should not have merely deferred this yesterday, you should have dismissed the entire approach, and start over. If you persist with this approach to the many planning issues surrounding the arena, it is nothing less than a perversion of democracy in Markham.

Summary, your worship,

1. as ratepayer group surveys have already told you, residents do not want to assume financial risks in order to allow a private sector business to operate an NHL team and arena,
2. please do the site planning in the context of a proper financial plan, and
3. do it in the usual transparent democratic fashion that we have come to expect in Markham.