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DEPUTATION ON MAIN STREET UNIONVILLE COMMUNITY VISION PLAN - STAFF REPORT OF MARCH 24, 2015 ON (A) CREATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE, (B) BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON A PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

March 24, 2015

I'm representing URA in this deputation. This deputation also has the support of our sister organization, the Unionville Villagers Association. As you know, our organizations have been heavily involved in the Main Street Vision Plan since Day 1 and made a deputation on the Plan in January. We are pleased to see this prompt response by staff to two of the key motions made by Council in January. We have a few comments.

1. We support the idea that staff will develop an Implementation Summary document. It should prove helpful. Please include recommendations on the retail improvement components of the plan.
2. We support the formation of the Advisory Committee and will be pleased to participate. In addition to the representatives named, there needs to be representation from the property owners on Highway 7
3. We are supportive of the Property Development Coordinator position. The key question is how to fund the position. We believe that a combination of public and property owner funds, namely a "hybrid", should be used. Although there are obviously benefits to the owners if the vision is implemented, there are also public benefits as well. Our neighbourhood Main Streets are critical components of a vibrant and cohesive community...much as our community centres, parks, pathway systems, etc are. Also the commercial viability of our Main Streets is important. This is true in Unionville, Markham Village, Thornhill, Milliken, Cornell, Cathedraltown, etc.. They are each at different stages of maturity and need different help in ensuring their success. We believe they are all critical pieces of our City and that the residents of all of them would support continued strong City financial support in each core area.

The City will also be a direct beneficiary of increased development and vitality in the study area. It will receive Development Charges and higher property taxes. The City is also the major landowner in the area (Library, Varley Gallery, Crosby Arena, McKay Gallery, central gateway, Bandshell, Recycling Depot, Train Station, Stiver Mill) and would benefit from property value increases.

With this overarching principle in mind, we think it is important for the City to continue to explore creative funding partnerships. For the public portion, we are intrigued with ideas like grants through a Community Improvement Plan, as well as a Local Improvement Charge. One idea that the URA Directors have been discussing is whether local residents would be willing to contribute to funding, eg a Local

Improvement Charge on properties in Ward 3. Another option could be a funding contribution from the Ratepayer Association itself. We would be prepared to put these questions to our members.

4. We are also prepared to work hard with the BIA and local business property owners to bring them to the table. This could include off-line meetings with them for educational purposes, or working towards getting better attendance at any future meetings with the Mayor and Councillors. For example, we have heard from property owners that they had insufficient advance warning of the proposed Mayor's meeting. We recommend that next time, the BIA and the residents be involved in facilitating the contact with the owners and explaining the importance of the meeting.

5. My last point is that there is a lot of doubt on the street that we can implement this vision. So we clearly need some quick wins. And to do this, we'd like to see full-speed-ahead on implementing the Vision Committee and working again to set up a Mayor's meeting with property owners.

In conclusion, Unionville Main Street is a key asset to Markham and its citizens. URA is prepared to invest sweat equity and potentially financial equity to implement the Vision that we all support.

We applaud the Council for having the foresight to fund the initial study and encourage you to have the wisdom to continue this support at least in part in the early stages of implementation. We are not talking about a lot of money here – likely about 0.5 of a person. The project needs to be kick-started and there is a strong risk that without the City's guiding hand and pocketbook, the investment in the study will be wasted.

Peter Miasek