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URA Member Meeting Minutes

January 09, 2017

Pan Am Centre

URA Directors:

Alick Siu, Karen Lui, Peter Miasek, Gene Genin, Tom Davies, Adam Poon, Kanthini Rajakanthan, Donna Day & Reid McAlpine

Elected Officials:

Councillor Ward 3: Don Hamilton

Regional Councillor: Joe Li

Special Guest:

Rick Ferrell, York Region General Manager, Housing Services

Attendance:

Approximately 15 members

1. President's Introduction

URA Director, Reid McAlpine, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Reid welcomed members, special guests and elected officials.

2. Membership Matters

2.1 Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2016 meeting minutes' stand approved as read.

2.2. Membership Report

Director, Donna Day confirmed that membership stood at 298 households. Paid membership fell from 45 to 17% since many memberships expired at year-end. Donna also announced that after this meeting she will be transferring membership duties to a, yet to be named, URA Director. Donna will retain Treasury responsibilities.

2.3 Treasurer's Report

Director, Donna Day provided a preliminary Treasurer's report. The highlights included renewal of a \$10,000 GIC at 0.6% and a current bank balance of \$2,550.

3. Committee Reports & Focus Topics

3.1 Anti-SLAPP/Protection of Public Participation (Reid McAlpine)

Reid provided an update on a defamation lawsuit brought by United Soils Management Ltd. against Stouffville resident, Katie Mohammed, for her comments on Facebook. The URA will be monitoring the court hearing scheduled early February 2017 to gauge the effectiveness of the new Anti-SLAPP legislation.

3.2 Tree Preservation (Reid McAlpine)

As part of its efforts to profile tree preservation in Markham, Reid advised that a Gainsville Ave. homeowner, who cut down a large tree on City property valued at \$75,000, is scheduled for February 9 court hearing. In response to the Gainsville and other tree cutting incidents an on-line petition, urging Markham to strengthen tree protection, was launched.

3.3 Ontario Municipal Board Review – Public Consultation (Reid McAlpine)

In October 2016, the Ontario government launched a review of rules governing the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The review included public consultations. In response, the URA, under Reid’s stewardship provided comprehensive feedback on ways to improve the land development dispute resolution process governed by the OMB.

Details of the URA submission were provided at November’s Members’ meeting. Feedback is currently under review with possible changes scheduled for spring 2017.

3.4 Public Realm Community Board Pilot (Peter Miasek)

Peter reviewed a proposal to pilot community bulletin and message boards at several locations in Ward 3. Since Main St. is a practical location, Peter proposed consulting the BIA for feedback.

Motion: That the Unionville Ratepayers Association consult with the BIA on the installation of community message boards.

Moved by: Peter Miasek

Seconded by: Reid McAlpine

Membership vote: Seven for and six against.

Motion carried.

3.5 Traffic and Transportation (Peter Miasek)

Peter reviewed the status of various transportation projects underway in Markham. Highlights included:

- planned widening of 16th Ave. between Bayview and Woodbine
- Verclaire Gate – Rouge River bridge construction
- the planned addition of Hwy 404 HOV lanes north of Highway #7
- the addition of an extra daily GO Train
- Go Train anti-whistle implementation scheduled for 2017
- planning for the extension of Miller Ave.

4. Council Updates

Regional Councillor, Joe Li provided updates on the potential use of underground automated garbage collection in new developments, such as Buttonville. In addition, Councillor Li shared his frustration with the lack of progress with York Region’s affordable housing plans.

Councillor Hamilton confirmed that the construction fencing on the west-side of Toogood Pond is for the Pathway Project. As part of the improvement, the west-side path will have a paved surface.

5. New Business

Paul Morrison advised that ground disturbance caused by construction at Fred Varley Tribute condo site was damaging basement floors and walls of nearby homes and requested that the URA facilitate a meeting with the contractor to facilitate communication and community engagement.

6. Closing Remarks

Reid advised the members that Director, Keing Li, has resigned from the URA. Reid also thanked all those who helped with December’s joint URA, UVA and SURF Christmas event.

7. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

8. Special Presentation – Housing Services in York Region (Rick Farrell)

Guest speaker, Rick Farrell – General Manager, Housing Services for York Region presented an overview of the region’s 10-year affordable housing strategy and plans.

Key relevant facts:

1. From 2005 to 2015 wages have go up by 18.3% while housing increased by 104%
2. Rental vacancy rate is 1.6%
3. 61 new rental units built in the last four years
4. In 2014 York Region had one of the lowest social housing units per residents’ ratios of nay municipality
5. York Region’s subsidized wait list is currently 13,600 households resulting in an eight to nine year wait time

Regions 10-year plan:

1. Increase the supply of rental units
2. Sustain the existing rental housing supply
3. Support home ownership affordability
4. Strengthen the homelessness and housing stability system