

# Electronic Development Services Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Number 17  
July 12, 2021, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
Live streamed

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| Roll Call | Mayor Frank Scarpitti<br>Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton<br>Regional Councillor Jack Heath<br>Regional Councillor Joe Li<br>Regional Councillor Jim Jones<br>Councillor Keith Irish<br>Councillor Alan Ho  | Councillor Reid McAlpine<br>Councillor Karen Rea<br>Councillor Andrew Keyes<br>Councillor Amanda Collucci<br>Councillor Khalid Usman<br>Councillor Isa Lee   |
| Staff     | Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer<br>Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services<br>Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services<br>Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources<br>Christina Kakaflikas, Acting Director, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship<br>Biju Karumanchery, Director, Planning & Urban Design<br>Bryan Frois, Chief of Staff<br>Joel Lustig, Treasurer<br>Ron Blake, Senior Development Manager, Planning & Urban Design<br>Francesco Santaguida, Assistant City Solicitor | Loy Cheah, Senior Manager of Transportation<br>Darryl Lyons, Manager, Policy<br>Stacia Muradali, Manager, Development - East<br>Marg Wouters, Senior Manager, Policy & Research<br>Alida Tari, Manager, Access & Privacy<br>Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator<br>Mary-Jane Courchesne<br>Frank Clarizio, Director, Engineering<br>Shane Manson, Senior Manager, Revenue & Property Taxation<br>Martha Pettit, Deputy Clerk |

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## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

In consideration of the ongoing public health orders, this meeting was conducted electronically to maintain physical distancing of participants. With the passage of the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020* (Bill 197), municipal Council Members are now permitted to meet remotely and count towards quorum.

The Development Services Committee meeting convened at 9:34 AM with Regional Councillor Jim Jones in the Chair for all items on the agenda.

Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton arrived at 9:13 AM.

Committee recessed from 11:42 AM -12:40 PM.

## **2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There are no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

## **3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

### **3.1 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – JUNE 21, 2021 (10.0)**

Moved by Regional Councillor Jack Heath

Seconded by Councillor Isa Lee

1. That the minutes of the Development Services Committee meeting held June 21, 2021, be confirmed.

**Carried**

## **4. DEPUTATIONS**

There were deputations for the following items:

- 9.1 - Boxgrove Commercial East Inc. C/O Smartcentres Reit to Permit s Commercial Self-Storage Warehouse Facility At 500 Copper Creek Drive (Ward 7) File Plan 20 120313 (10.3, 10.5)
- 9.2 - City of Markham Comments on York Region's Proposed Growth Forecast to 2051 (10.0)

## **5. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **5.1 BOXGROVE COMMERCIAL EAST INC. C/O SMARTCENTRES REIT TO PERMIT A COMMERCIAL SELF-STORAGE WAREHOUSE**

**FACILITY AT 500 COPPER CREEK DRIVE (WARD 7) FILE PLAN 20  
120313 (10.3, 10.5)**

Moved by Councillor Khalid Usman

Seconded by Councillor Amanda Collucci

That the following communications providing comments regarding the above subject matter be received for information purposes:

1. Beatrice Bogart
2. Rita Camilleri
3. Robert McKone
4. Nasir Vhora

**Carried**

**5.2 VACANT HOUSING TAX (7.0)**

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish

Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

1. That the communication submitted by Edwin Lang providing comments on the above subject matter be received.

**Carried**

**5.3 CITYOF MARKHAM COMMENTS ON YORK REGION'S PROPOSED  
GROWTH FORECAST TO 2051 (10.0)**

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish

Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

That the following communications providing comments on the above subject matter be received:

1. Brutto Consulting

**Carried**

## 6. PETITIONS

Nimisha Patel submitted a community survey on the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendment Applications Submitted by Box Grove Commercial Inc. c/o Smartcentres Reit.

## 7. CONSENT REPORTS - DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY ISSUES

### 7.1 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 15, 2021 AND JUNE 28, 2021 (10.0)

Councillor Keith Irish requested the sentence “No written submissions were received regarding this proposal” be deleted from page 3 of the June 15, 2021 minutes.

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish  
Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

1. That the minutes of the Development Services Public meetings held June 15, 2021 and June 28, 2021, be confirmed.

**Carried**

### 7.2 HERITAGE MARKHAM COMMITTEE MINUTES – JUNE 9, 2021 (16.11)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton  
Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

1. That the minutes of the Heritage Markham Committee meeting held June 9, 2021, be received for information purposes.

**Carried**

## 8. PRESENTATIONS - DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY ISSUES

### 8.1 MiX INNOVATION DISTRICT: WHERE INNOVATION IS REALIZED (10.0)

Christina Kakaflikas, Acting Director of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship, provided background information on the proposed MiX Innovation District. The concept was first introduced at the Collision Tech Conference in Toronto in May 2019, and was well received by tech industry leaders, and by local and national media. The project was put on hold in 2020 in light of the economic uncertainty resulting from the pandemic. In March 2021, staff revisited the MiX in light of a vaccination strategy being put in place and an

economic recovery on the horizon. Staff felt it was appropriate to ensure the vision still resonated with stakeholders, that the timing was appropriate, and to explore potential opportunities regarding supply chain gaps that became apparent during the pandemic. . Urban Strategies was hired to conduct a visioning exercise to test the vision for the MiX, which included a series of interviews with industry leaders, real estate experts, and relevant public sector agencies. Urban Strategies also looked at the MiX's potential competitive advantage as an employment district, current employment trends, access priorities for various sectors and industries, and how the MiX can best capitalize and support innovation.

Ms. Kakaflikas introduced Joe Berridge, Partner, and Josh Neubauer, Principal, from Urban Strategies.

Mr. Berridge and Mr. Neubauer provided a presentation entitled "MiX Innovation District: Where Innovation is realized".

Committee provided the following feedback on the proposed MiX Innovation District:

- Discussed if the MiX should include residential housing, noting there is significant residential development in the areas surrounding the MiX and that permitting residential developments on the lands could raise the cost of the land making it less attractive to potential employers;
- Noted that the lands should only be leased to high value tenants to ensure the vision for the area can be developed;
- Discussed forming a land development corporation versus partnering with experts to manage the project and to attract tenants;
- Questioned if affordable housing could also be managed under the land development corporation (if one was established);
- Discussed the importance of sustainability into the MiX;
- Discussed the future road network in this area;
- Discussed the proposed film studio's fit with the MiX's vision;
- Questioned weaknesses and threats in regards to the MiX;
- Questioned who the City's competition is, and if there are examples of other places that have created a similar type of employment district;
- Questioned if other levels of government have been consulted on the vision for the MiX;

- Suggested the need for the MiX to encourage connectivity between industries, and an opportunity to expand the employment district in the future;
- Suggested that improvements to transit in the area should be discussed and planned for now;
- Suggested that developing the MiX is strategically important to Canada, Ontario, and Markham.

Mr. Berridge and Mr. Neubauer responded to inquiries from the public, advising that Kanata is an example of an employment district that was created based on a similar vision as the MiX. In Kanata, the residential developments occurred after the employment district was created and employers were attracted. In Markham, the proposed employment district already has nearby residential developments, and permitting residential development on the lands could drive land values up significantly in the employment district. Mr. Berridge and Mr. Neubauer further advised that experts consulted did not suggest that residential development should be included in the MiX or that the Donald Cousens Parkway extension was imperative to the development of the district, but they did note the importance of having nearby housing and a 404 interchange. Experts also suggested that if the area is developed with sustainable infrastructure, it might help attract tech-based organizations, as these organizations want to show their customers, employees, and investors that they are sustainable. Experts were very enthusiastic in regards to the MiX proposal. The lack of transit in the area was identified as a potential weakness, as it may be challenging for younger workers and co-op students to access the proposed employment district.

Mr. Berridge and Mr. Neubauer advised that a film studio fits with the vision for the MiX. The film studio may also attract other industries and types of employment, such as manufacturing, tech organizations, and skilled trade jobs. Mr. Berridge and Mr. Neubauer suggested the tenants of the land will drive the landforms on the employment lands, for example, manufacturers will require single floor space with high ceilings and the knowledge sector employers will likely require office buildings, noting there will probably be a variety of landforms that are developed on the employment lands.

Moved by Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

1. That the presentation entitled “MiX Innovation District: Where Innovation is realized,” dated July 12, 2021 be received; and

2. **That staff be directed to report back to Development Services Committee outlining the next steps in Fall 2021; and further**
3. **That the guiding principles outlined in the presentation be endorsed in principle.**

**Carried**

## **9. REGULAR REPORTS - DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY ISSUES**

### **9.1 RECOMMENDATION REPORT OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BOXGROVE COMMERCIAL EAST INC. C/O SMARTCENTRES REIT TO PERMIT A COMMERCIAL SELF-STORAGE WAREHOUSE FACILITY AT 500 COPPER CREEK DRIVE**

**(WARD 7) FILE PLAN 20 120313 (10.3, 10.5)**

Biju Karumanchery, Acting Commissioner of Development Services introduced the item.

Ron Blake, Senior Manager of Development, addressed the Committee and provided a summary of the report. The report recommends that the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendment Applications submitted by Box Grove Commercial East Inc. c/o SmartCentres REIT to permit a commercial self-storage facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive be approved by Council once a satisfactory site plan application has been submitted and reviewed.

Chris Caverson, Smart Centres, provided a presentation on the proposed development.

The following deputations were made relative to the proposed development:

Rita Camilleri advised that she did not support having a storage facility in a residential community. Ms. Camilleri expressed concern regarding the lighting and noise the facility may create, that the facility may be open 24 hours, that residents could only provide their comments through the chat function at the last community meeting on the proposed development, and that there would be a reduction in parking at the commercial mall. Ms. Camilleri had hoped there would be retail and restaurants uses on the subject lands, and questioned if the concept of building the facility underground had been explored.

Nimisha Patel advised that the applicant has addressed the majority of the community's concerns, but that residents were still concerned regarding the height, location and compatibility of the use with the existing community. The residents' preference is for there to be retail and restaurant usages on the subject lands. Ms. Patel also requested that the sign be setback further to ensure site lines are not blocked, and that traffic measures be planned for the commercial plaza that would make the intersection safer for pedestrians.

Committee discussed the following relative to the proposed development:

- Questioned if the concept of reducing the building height by having some of the floors underground was explored;
- Questioned if the lights could be turned off at a specific time;
- Supported the developed as a much taller office building could be built on the site, which would be less compatible with the community;
- Requested that additional landscaping be added to the site and that staff work with the applicant on the landscaping;
- Noted that the applicant has worked with the community and has made a lot of adjustments to the proposal based on the feedback they received from residents;
- Suggested that the applicant consider putting one row of residential condominium units on the south side of the proposed development.

Councillor Kahlid Usman, Ward 7 Councillor, advised that he will not be supporting the application as the majority of his constituents are not in support of the proposed development.

Ms. Bliss Edwards, representing the applicant, responded to inquiries from the Committee, advising that the development proposal will include 17 parking spots of which 2 will be for staff. The parking spots will be separated from the Walmart parking by landscaping. The majority of businesses will access there storage lockers through the loading dock, and will not use the parking spaces. The proposed development already includes enhanced landscaping, as these types of enhancement help attract customers. The applicant is willing to work with staff on further enhancements to the landscaping. The storage facility will be opened from 6:00 a.m. -10:00 p.m., and the lights will be turned off at 10:00 p.m.

Mr. Blake confirmed that the current Zoning By-Law in effect on the subject lands permits an office building with a maximum height of 45 metres or approximately 15 stories to be built on the site. Mr. Blake clarified that the height

restrictions to be set out in the new site-specific zoning provisions for the proposed development will be based on an appropriate site plan submission.

Nicholas Caragianis, architect, representing the applicant, advised that the building has been designed so that it can be reconfigured to accommodate retail and restaurant uses in the future if required. The building was also designed to be very strong, as it was built as a storage facility. Therefore, it could be repurposed in the future if required.

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes  
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

That the Zoning By-law Amendment application (PLN 20 134853) submitted by Boxgrove Commercial East Inc. c/o Smart Centre REIT to permit a commercial self-storage warehouse facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive be denied.

**Lost**

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes  
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

1. **That the deputations by Rita Camilleri, and Nimisha Patel regarding , Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications submitted by Boxgrove Commercial East Inc. c/o SmartCentres REIT to permit a commercial self-storage warehouse facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive (Ward 7)”, be received; and,**
2. That the report dated June 22nd, 2021 and titled “RECOMMENDATION REPORT, Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications submitted by Boxgrove Commercial East Inc. c/o SmartCentres REIT to permit a commercial self-storage warehouse facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive (Ward 7)”, be received; and,
3. That the Official Plan Amendment Application (PLN 20120313) submitted by Boxgrove Commercial East c/o SmartCentres REIT to allow a commercial self-storage warehouse facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive be approved by Council at a later date; once a satisfactory site plan application has been submitted and reviewed; and,
4. That the Zoning By-law Amendment application (PLN 20 134853) submitted by Boxgrove Commercial East Inc. c/o Smart Centre REIT to permit a commercial self-storage warehouse facility at 500 Copper Creek Drive be approved and enacted by Council at a later date; once a satisfactory site plan application has been submitted and reviewed; and further,

5. That Staff be authorized to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**Carried**

## **9.2 CITY OF MARKHAM COMMENTS ON YORK REGION'S PROPOSED GROWTH FORECAST TO 2051 (10.0)**

Marg Wouters, Senior Manager of Policy and Research, provided a presentation on the City of Markham's Comments on York Region's Proposed Growth Forecast.

The following deputations were made on Markham's Comment's on the proposed York Region Growth Forecast to 2051.

James Button spoke in regards to the importance of protecting the Almira Hamlet and the homes located in this area from urban development, noting that historically hamlets have been protected by the City. Mr. Button also suggest that 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue should remain two lanes in the hamlet and that a by-pass should potentially be created to protect the community.

Don Given suggested that the staff recommendation is moving in right direction, as it recognizes that the Amira Hamlet needs to be protected, and it proposes a better divide between the employment and residential lands. Mr. Given advised that the small parcels of land east of Warden would need to consolidated in the future to be used as employment lands. Mr. Given requested that the Committee considering extending the residential lands to Warden Avenue, as he suggested that the lands east of Hwy 48 will not be suitable for residential development due to the development of the proposed Pickering Airport.

Ryan Guetter, Weston Consulting, representing the landowner on the southeast corner of Elgin Mills and Highway 48, supported the staff recommendation that identifies his client's lands as suitable for urban expansion for community purposes.

Claudio Brutto, Brutto Consulting, representing the landowners on the west side of Kennedy Road supported the staff recommendation with respect to Markham's comments on York Region's Growth Forecast to 2051, specifically the recommendation to reconfigure the employment boundaries.

Committee provided the following feedback relative to the staff report:

- Suggested that the development of condominiums in downtown Toronto has had a significant impact on Markham's growth;
- Noted that there is a need for the development of various housing types in Markham, including single detached dwellings;
- Suggested that employment lands should be well serviced by transportation, and that transit stations should be planned simultaneously with growth;
- Suggested that employment lands close to the MiX lands should not be considered for residential uses;
- Suggested that the lands along Hwy 404 should be kept for employment uses;
- Noted that urban expansion is occurring across Markham (in the north, south, east, and west);
- Suggested Markham should have a higher intensification rate within its urban boundary and that the whitebelt lands should be protected from development as much as possible;
- Questioned how development will be phased;
- Suggested that traffic congestion will likely increase in the south with the expansion of the urban boundary;
- Noted that traffic congestion can have a negative impact on a City's economy and growth;
- Suggested that the City needs to carefully investigate the best solution for managing traffic congestion in northern Markham as it grows;
- Questioned if 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue is suitable to be widened to 4 lanes.

Ms. Wouters advised that staff are proposing that the employment area expansion lands be reconfigured to exclude the Almira Hamlet to protect the hamlet and to ensure that a residential enclave is not formed in an employment area. Staff are also recommending that the Region consider allowing 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to remain as 2 lanes in this location. Ms. Wouters further advised that the City could recommend a higher intensification rate within Markham's urban boundary, but this could lower Markham's population growth as it may limit the amount of growth it can deliver on an annual basis, and further it could, impact the intensification rate of other York Region municipalities. Ms. Wouters clarified that York Region is required by the Province to have a Growth Forecast until 2051, and it sets its growth targets based on a number of considerations. The progression of the

development will depend on phasing policies, and on the timing of the development of major infrastructure.

Loy Cheah, Senior Manager of Transportation, advised that the conceptual plans for the Donald Cousens Parkway will be revisited after York Region completes its analysis of the growth forecast. The analysis will determine if the Donald Cousens Parkway is needed or if growth can be accommodated by making improvements to the existing road network.

Moved by Regional Councillor Jack Heath

Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

**1. That the deputations by James Button, Don Given, Ryan Guetter, and Claudio Brutto on the City of Markham Comments on York Region's Growth Forecast to 2051, be received; and,**

**2. That staff be directed to conduct further analysis on the impact of a higher intensification target such as 60, 65 or 70% for the City of Markham, and the proposed reconfiguration of the employment area expansion lands on the need for Markham's whitebelt lands in York Region's Growth Forecast.**

**3. That staff report back to Development Services Committee in early Fall 2021.**

**Carried**

## **10. MOTIONS**

### **10.1 VACANT HOUSING TAX (7.0)**

Councillor Karen Rea provided an overview of how vacant properties are one of the many issues causing Canada's housing crisis. Councillor Rea advised that when Vancouver introduced its vacant housing tax the number of vacant houses decreased by 30%. Councillor Rea further advised that the City of Ottawa is implementing a vacant housing tax in 2022, and that the City of Toronto and the City of Hamilton are also investigating the possibility of implementing a vacant housing tax.

Committee provided the following feedback on the proposal for a vacant housing tax:

- Expressed concern that landlords that are trying to rent there unit, but cannot would be taxed;

- Suggested if the City proceeds with a vacant housing tax that it be implemented in 2022;
- Expressed concern that there is not enough data to support that a vacant housing tax will increase the housing supply;
- Expressed concern that implementing a vacant housing tax will be difficult to enforce, and that it will create too much bureaucracy;
- Suggested that more effort should be placed on other ways of increasing the housing supply, such as making it faster for developments to be built;
- Suggested that the City should wait until the Federal Government releases its Federal vacant housing tax program;
- Suggested that a 1% tax will not be enough of an incentive to homeowners to rent or sell their vacant properties;
- Suggested that a staff report is needed prior to the announcement of the Federal program to answer Committee's questions.

Committee consented to referring the motion to the July 14, 2021 Council meeting.

Moved by Councillor Karen Rea

Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

Whereas housing prices have seen a significant increase in the past couple of years; and

Whereas residents, especially young residents are experiencing difficulty entering the housing market due to a lack of affordable homes; and

Whereas there has been an increase in buyers purchasing properties and upon closing, many of these homes remain unoccupied; and

Whereas some absentee homeowners are not maintaining their properties; and

Whereas implementing a residential vacant unit tax will encourage homeowners to maintain, occupy or rent their properties which will help increase the housing supply; and

Whereas the Province of Ontario has announced a new tax authority on vacant homes that will give Toronto and other interested municipalities the power to impose such a tax to encourage owners to sell or rent such spaces;

Now therefore be it resolved:

1. That staff be directed to investigate options for imposing a vacant home tax on the assessment of vacant residential units under the new provincial initiative and report back with recommendations in Q4 2021 for Council's consideration.

**Postponed**

**11. NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were no notices of motion.

**12. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Karen Rea requested that a status update be provided on the Tremont Hotel, and that it be added to the abeyance lists.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

The Development Services Committee adjourned at 3:18 PM.