



## MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

**Electronic Zoom Meeting  
November 25, 2021**

#### Attendance

##### Present

Stuart Cumner, Chair  
Caryn Bergmann, Immediate Past Chair  
Ashok Bangia  
Karl Fernandes  
Phil Ling  
Karl Lyew  
Nadine Pinto  
Frank Vignando

##### Regrets

Kevin Boon  
Victoria Genge  
Andrew Hazen, Vice Chair  
Paddy Wong  
Jennifer Wong, Sustainability Coordinator

##### Council

Regional Councillor Joe Li

##### Guest

Vicki Choy, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)

##### Staff

Gabriela Ansari-Correa, Community Engagement Assistant  
Janet Reid, Community Engagement Program Specialist  
Graham Seaman, Director Sustainability & Asset Management  
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Clerk

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) was called to order at 7:05 PM with Stuart Cumner presiding as Chair.

#### **2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted with two additions as Other Business:

- Whitebelt Lands
- Nadine Pinto resignation

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 28, 2021**

It was noted that the minutes incorrectly indicated that the next meeting of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee was scheduled for Thursday, November 24, 2021, rather than correctly as Thursday, November 25, 2021.

It was

Moved by           Caryn Bergmann  
Seconded by       Frank Vignando

That the minutes of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) meeting held on October 28, 2021 be adopted with the correction as noted.

CARRIED

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Regional Councillor Joe Li advised that a proposal regarding the proposed installation of infrastructure for an underground waste management system for new developments with over 500 units was considered and passed by the Markham Development Services Committee on November 22, 2021. This will be the first such system in Ontario; there is already an underground waste management system in Quebec.

**5. MEAC FOCUS FOR 2021**

Chair Stuart Cumner reported on behalf of Andrew Hazen on recent developments of the "Get Your Lawn Off Gas!" project; the plan is for MEAC and the Sustainability office to develop plans to encourage Markham residents to replace their use of gas powered equipment such as mowers, trimmers, blowers, and snowblowers with plug-in electric, rechargeable, or "human powered" versions.

It was reported that the York University students working with MEAC are already involved in conducting research on emissions as well as other such programs e.g., the National Capital Commission which plans to ban all small gas garden equipment by April 2023. The students are also brainstorming ideas such as lawn alternatives and photo competitions to promote the project. The subcommittee is respectful of the students' time and will ensure the MEAC work does not interfere with their studies or become too onerous for them.

Graham Seaman, Director Sustainability & Asset Management, advised that in order to support the project, a concise proposal would be required indicating the objectives MEAC hoped to achieve and the benefits to be gained for the community. It was noted that Markham is currently conducting a pilot project where two crews from the Operations Department use electric equipment; early feedback is that the plot is going well although the equipment is reported to be heavier. Graham Seaman thanked MEAC for its efforts with this project, noting that it could be a very promising program to bring about change at the personal level.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

None was identified.

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS

- Climate Emergency Declaration - Graham Seaman provided an update advising that it's a difficult situation because Markham Council does not feel it is appropriate to include the word "Emergency" in this context compared with the Covid emergency; however, to be considered along with the Climate Emergency Declarations made by other municipalities, the word "Emergency" must be included. The recommended actions for Council were discussed. Disappointment was expressed by MEAC members on the progress of this declaration at a time of climate crisis. Graham Seaman reported he will submit a memo to Council in the next few months to finalize this matter.

Vicki Choy mentioned that the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) has passed a national resolution related to this matter. There are over one hundred CFUW members in Markham and they would like to see the City do more in this area.

In response to questions about why Toronto might have more influence over developers, Graham Seaman advised that the City of Toronto Act gives Toronto more powers than other municipalities; however, Markham has been successful in negotiating higher charges than the minimums set out in the Building Code.

- Whitebelt Lands – It was reported that York Regional Council recently voted to use a 50/55 per cent intensification rate of growth on whitebelt lands thereby opening up more land to development. It is thought that a higher intensification rate at 60 per cent would be a better move for the environment and help address concerns about sprawl. Whitebelt land is designated as prime agricultural and countryside areas that can be rezoned as residential to accommodate future growth and employment targets set by the province. MEAC wondered why York Regional Councillors (at which Markham representatives were present) had voted for the lower intensification and found it shocking that such an important matter was not brought to its attention so it could provide advice to the Councillors. It was noted the decision would have been made through a regional lens – the cost per unit of infrastructure in Markham is less than half of the cost for other municipalities in York Region and the emission profile was lower in Markham, therefore it is likely emissions would be lower for construction in Markham than elsewhere in York Region.

The need for matters of such environmental importance, to be brought to MEAC members attention, was stressed.

MEAC members also discussed that Flato Developments has requested the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to issue a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) on whitebelt lands north of 19th Avenue east of McCowan Rd to construct about 800 – 1200 residential units. MEAC was informed that MZO's allow the province to expedite construction projects, thus significantly reducing project time and resulting project costs.

- Resignation - Nadine Pinto advised that this would be her last meeting. On behalf of MEAC, Chair Stuart Cumner thanked her for efforts on behalf of MEAC and wished her luck in her future endeavours.

- On behalf of MEAC, Chair Stuart Cumner thanked Immediate Past Chair Caryn Bergmann for her efforts as Chair of MEAC over the last year.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

It was

Moved by           Karl Lyew  
Seconded by       Caryn Bergmann

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee adjourn at 8:35 PM.

**CARRIED**