

From: Valerie Burke <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 11:50 AM
To: Clerks Public ; Gold, Laura ; Cane, Trinela ; Pak, Jay ; Silva, Joseph
Subject: Markham's 2024 Budget

I have the following comments regarding the 2024 Budget:

24011 Biodiversity Strategy (to protect/support biodiversity and nature-based ecosystem services \$156,400 - I am very pleased to see that Markham is embarking on this initiative because the global decline in biodiversity is a very serious problem for all of us. According to a United Nations report "Biodiversity forms the web of life that we depend on for so many things – food, water, medicine, a stable climate, economic growth, among others. Over half of global GDP is dependent on nature. Nature is in crisis. Up to one million species are threatened with extinction, many within decades."

24019 - Planning for Urban Boundary Expansion Lands \$254,400 - I do not support urban boundary expansion (urban sprawl) because it is costly to taxpayers who will have to pay for the upkeep to all the necessary infrastructure such as roads, sewers, bridges. Expanding the urban boundary will increase traffic, destroy farmland, as well as wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and forests. These ecosystems provide us with free vital gifts such as stormwater protection, clean air, cooling, carbon sequestration, and habitat for pollinators, etc. Sprawl compromises food security because once farmland is built on it is lost forever and we lose access to fresh, healthy local food. The original purpose of intensification was to protect farmland and ecosystems. Now we are getting extreme intensification as well as urban sprawl.

24013 – Designated Heritage Property Grant – Residential \$30,000 – This program is very beneficial to heritage homeowners and it demonstrates Markham's commitment to protect our built heritage. Unfortunately the amount of funding has never increased since its inception in 2010. As you are well aware, the cost of everything has gone up and that includes contractors and materials. Quite often the grant money has been reduced to individuals because there was not enough funding for the number of applicants. I recommend that the grant be increased to \$50,000 yearly.

In conclusion, I preferred the former budget process with the Budget Subcommittee. I found the former process was more inclusive and transparent. It provided residents and Councillors more time to thoroughly review and understand the budget.

Valerie Burke