

Development Services Public Meeting Minutes

Meeting Number: 1
January 23, 2024, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Live streamed

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| Roll Call | Mayor Frank Scarpitti Deputy Mayor Michael Chan Regional Councillor Jim Jones Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Keith Irish | Councillor Ritch Lau Councillor Karen Rea Councillor Andrew Keyes Councillor Amanda Collucci Councillor Juanita Nathan Councillor Isa Lee |
| Regrets | Councillor Reid McAlpine | |
| Staff | Stacia Muradali, Manager, Development - East Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator | Carlson Tsang, Senior Planner Stephen Lue, Senior Manager, Development |

Alternate formats for this document are available upon request

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Development Services Public meeting convened at 7:05 PM with Regional Councillor Joe Li in the Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. DEPUTATIONS

Deputations were heard with the respective item.

4. REPORTS

4.1 PUBLIC MEETING INFORMATION REPORT, YORK REGION, APPLICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL PLAN AND, ZONING BY-LAW

AMENDMENTS TO PERMIT A FOUR TO SIX-STOREYS AFFORDABLE RENTAL BUILDING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF 14TH AVENUE AND DONALD COUSENS PARKWAY

(WARD 7), FILE NO. PLAN 21 120261 (10.3, 10.5)

The Public Meeting this date was to consider an application submitted by York Region.

The Committee Clerk advised that 117 notices were mailed on January 3, 2024 and a Public Meeting sign was posted on December 18, 2023. There was 1 written submission received regarding this proposal.

Carlson Tsang, Senior Planner, provided a presentation on the proposed affordable housing rental building.

Sabrina Greggain, Program Manager, Affordable Housing Development, York Region, provided a presentation on the proposed affordable housing rental building.

Graham Hendren, Housing Development Planner, presented information on the affordable housing crisis in York Region.

The following deputations were made on the proposed affordable housing rental building:

1. Wesley Yeung expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the schools may not be able to handle the influx of students from the proposed affordable housing units; the size and quality of the building could possibly be adjusted to stay on budget; that project could be put on pause due to budget constraints; and, that there are more suitable sites for affordable housing that have better access to amenities and transit. Mr. Yeung asked York Region to reconsider the location of the proposed affordable housing rental building.
2. Jason Billinger expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed affordable housing building: that the school system will not be able to handle the influx of new students resulting from the proposed development; and the traffic issues related to the plowing of the snow on Vettese Court, as this is already an issue that will worsen with the influx of more people into the community; and the current infrastructure is not designed to accommodate this type of development.

3. 3. Patrick O'Donnell spoke in favour of building more affordable housing, but in opposition to the location of the proposed affordable housing rental building, expressing the following concerns: there are more central and suitable locations for an affordable housing rental building; the traffic the building will generate, especially on Vettese Court; that there is not enough visitor parking; that the area is not served by frequent transit; and the proposed right in and right out on to Donald Cousens Parkway due to it likely being unsafe as a result to drivers frequently speeding on Donald Cousens Parkway.
4. Syed Mehdi spoke in support of building more affordable housing, but in strong opposition to the proposed location of the affordable housing rental building. Mr. Mehdi expressed the following concerns: the additional traffic the proposed development will generate; and that the bus service in the area is not sufficient to support affordable housing. Mr. Mehdi hoped that the affordable housing rental building does not get built in this location.
5. Jack Heath spoke of the importance of this affordable housing project, but suggested that the proposal still needs some work, including: possibly increasing the height of the affordable housing rental building on Donald Cousens Parkway and decreasing the height of the building on Vettese Court; referring the application back to staff so that the final version of the project is viewed at the Development Services Committee; City staff reaching out to the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority to see if the set-back on the site can be removed to permit for the affordable housing rental building to be moved further away from the existing homes; construction workers not being permitted to park on Vettese Court; installing a traffic signal on Vettese Court to permit residents to exit; having some community amenities included inside the development; allowing existing residents to have access to the proposed right-in and right-out onto Donald Cousens Parkway; closing the existing sidewalk gap; and, ensuring there is no parking at the Rouge National Urban Park. Mr. Heath suggested that Council should approve the project in principle.
6. Austin Chin supported the comments of the other deputants and chose not to speak.
7. Priscilla Chan expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed affordable housing building: the community has not been permitted to provide enough input into the proposal; that the proposal will be located very close to the existing townhomes on Vettese Court; the location of the

garbage disposal; the location of the building is not suitable for affordable housing; and the traffic it will generate on Vettese Court. Ms. Chan requested that York Region reconsider the location of the proposed affordable housing rental building.

8. Abe Sivabalan supported the comments of the other deputants and expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed affordable housing rental building: the impact the proposal will have on his property value; that current issues with the snow plowing of Vettese Court will worsen; the impact it will have on traffic congestion; that location is not suitable for affordable housing; and that the proposal will overpopulate the schools.
9. 9. Gilbert Tsui spoke in support of affordable housing but suggested that the proposal for an affordable housing rental building in this location needs more work. Mr. Tsui made the following suggested improvements: address the gap in the sidewalk; ensure the site is planned to be cohesive with the schools and traffic; consider making the building facing Donald Cousens taller and the building facing Vettese Court shorter; ensure the proposal does not interfere with preservation of the Rouge National Urban Park.

The Committee provided the following feedback on the proposed development:

- Thanked York Region Staff and the deputants for their feedback.
- Questioned why there is not a large supply of purpose build rentals in York Region.
- Expressed excitement that an affordable housing rental building is being built in Markham.
- Questioned if York Region has other sites that it can consider for affordable housing.
- Discussed the funding of the project.
- Noted that traffic is an issue in all areas of Markham, and that residents will overtime start to use alternative forms of transportation.
- Noted that communities should have residents from all income levels.
- Stressed the need for affordable housing due to people with good jobs not being able to afford housing.
- Questioned if changes can still be made to the development proposal.

- Noted that communities need a complete range of housing types.
- Asked staff to reach out to the TRCA to investigate whether the setback can be reduced or removed, or if some of the flood control can be reshaped or redirected.
- Asked staff to investigate why there is a gap in the sidewalk in this location, and if it is possible to close the gap.
- Asked Staff to look at the possibility of adding landscaping to help separate the affordable housing rental building from the existing homes.
- Asked Staff to include a broader range of permitted housing types in the zoning by-law to provide greater flexibility (including townhouses).
- Noted that school populations fluctuate over time as the demographics of a community shift.
- Noted that there are lots of examples where affordable housing has been designed to blend into the existing community.
- Suggested that staff continue to work with residents to address some of the residents' concerns.
- Suggested that the construction workers park on the site during the construction of the project if possible.
- Need infill housing projects to meet Ontario's housing needs.

Karen Antonio-Hadcock, General Manager, Housing Services Antonio-Hadcock, advised that funding has been the main constraint with respect to building purpose built affordable rental units in the past. Ms. Antonio-Hadcock advised that this affordable rental housing building focuses on families, but some of their other buildings focus on affordable housing for seniors. Ms. Antonio-Hadcock clarified that York Region has other land that it can use for affordable housing and that staff are working towards advancing other affordable housing projects on some of these sites. Ms. Antonio-Hadcock said that no major changes can be made to the proposal now due to the project being completed under tight timelines to meet provincial and federal funding requirements.

Moved by Councillor Juanita Nathan
 Seconded by Mayor Frank Scarpitti

1. **That the deputations by Wesley Yeung, Patrick O'Donell, Jason Billinger, Syed Mehdi, Jack Heath, Austin Chin, Priscilla Chan, Gilbert Tsui, and Abe Sivabalan be received; and,**

2. **That the written submission by Bassanio Yip, be received; and,**
3. That the report entitled, “Public Meeting Information Report – Applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit an affordable rental buildings with a height of four and six storeys (Ward 7), File No. PLAN 21 120261” at the southwest corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway, submitted by the Regional Municipality of York, be received; and,
4. That the Record of the Public Meeting held on January 23, 2024, with respect to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments submitted by the Regional Municipality of York for the lands located at the southwest corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway (File No. PLAN 21 20261), be received; and,
5. That the Application submitted by the Regional Municipality of York, for the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments (File No. PLAN 21 20261), be referred back to staff for a report and recommendation; and further,
6. That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Carried

5. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Regional Councillor Jim Jones

Seconded by Councillor Amanda Collucci

The Development Services Public Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Carried