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To: Kitteringham, Kimberley <KKitteringham@markham.ca>

Subject: Special Budget 25 Public Meeting Tonight - Written Deputation

Written Deputation – Special Budget 25 Public Meeting

Markham's Strategic Budget Alignment with Provincial Housing Goals

November 4, 2024 – 7:00 pm

Council Members, Mayor, and Staff.

This Evening, I'd like to address the need for Markham to align its budget with Ontario's ambitious housing goal—to build 1.5 million homes by 2031.

1. **Strong Mayor powers need to be Housing Sensitive:** The province has introduced *strong mayor powers to facilitate swift and decisive action on housing*, giving mayors like ours the authority to adjust the budget and **prioritize initiatives that align** with these goals.

In this light, as a municipality operating under provincial authority, we are urged to **utilize these powers thoughtfully** to ensure our budget and operations align with provincial priorities, fostering Markham's sustainable, inclusive growth.

2. Addressing Budget Changes

To effectively meet the province's expectations, our budget needs reallocation toward key areas that directly impact housing capacity.

Infrastructure: Enabling us to support immediate and future housing projects – Clearly defined funding must go towards **expanding** road networks, public transit, utility systems, and future growth.

Affordable Housing Fund: By creating a fund, we can incentivize developers to include affordable units in their projects and partner with non-profit organizations to ensure a range of housing options for all income levels.

Streamlined Approvals: Investing in digital platforms for permit processing and staff training will help us reduce delays and make our planning processes more efficient—directly accelerating housing developments.

3. The Case for external standards in Smart City operations

In my considered opinion, an external Professional Management Provider (PMP), like IBM, with global expertise in municipal operations, can effectively manage Markham's large-scale projects. PMP's bring advanced tools and processes that can transform our

city's operations to be highly efficient and data-driven. Through advanced tools and industry-leading processes, PMPs can streamline city operations, boost efficiency, and minimize operational disruptions. I believe in:

- **Smart City Solutions:** The PMP, offers integrated technologies that improve urban planning and infrastructure maintenance, which supports smoother, faster development.
- **AI and Analytics:** Using data, a PMP can provide insights for better decision-making on housing and infrastructure, optimizing resources and ensuring strategic alignment.
- **Asset Management:** PMP's Maximo-like solutions are a powerful tool for managing our city's assets—extending infrastructure life and reducing long-term costs.

4. **Defining Council's New Advocacy Role within this Model**

In this streamlined decision-forward structure, councillors have an essential role as advocates that are similar to the work of elected community group presidents, reporting of non-confidential results and performance, accountability figures when assigned as city representatives by the Mayor, and policy influencers when asked for input by the Mayor.

- o **Community Representation:** Councillors act as advocates, mirroring the work of community leaders by reporting outcomes, providing oversight, and influencing policy when invited by the mayor.
- o **Oversight:** By monitoring a PMP's performance, councillors can ensure that city goals are met through regular transparently and responsible project reporting.
- o **Legislative Support:** Councillors' policy work will help support new housing developments and address broader priorities, from environmental safeguards to community inclusivity.
- o **Heritage and Cultural Advocacy:** Preserving Markham's unique identity amidst growth is crucial, and councillors can ensure development does not erode the city's heritage and social fabric.

5. **Closing and Call to Action**

1. To accomplish these goals, we must fully leverage our resources and modernize our governance approach, aligning with the province's expectations and the community's needs.

2. By leveraging PMP expertise, we can gain efficient operational control, allowing the mayor to drive housing initiatives with precision.
3. I urge the Mayor and this Council to **commit to realigning our budget to meet provincial goals**, redefine councillors' roles in this strategic model, and lead Markham into a new era of smart growth.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing how we can shape Markham's future together.

Barry Nelson

Resident of Ward1, Thornhill, Markham