

Development Services Public Meeting Minutes

Meeting Number: 15
November 19, 2024, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Live streamed

Roll Call	Mayor Frank Scarpitti Deputy Mayor Michael Chan Regional Councillor Jim Jones Regional Councillor Joe Li Regional Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Keith Irish Councillor Ritch Lau	Councillor Reid McAlpine Councillor Karen Rea Councillor Andrew Keyes Councillor Amanda Collucci Councillor Juanita Nathan Councillor Isa Lee
Staff	Rick Cefaratti, Senior Planner, West District Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator	Stephen Lue, Senior Manager, Development

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Development Service Public Meeting convened at 7:02 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 items.

4. REPORTS

4.1 PUBLIC MEETING INFORMATION REPORT, PRIMONT HOMES (LESLIE/JOHN) INC. AT NORTHEAST CORNER OF JOHN STREET AND LESLIE STREET, MUNICIPALLY KNOWN AS 2300 JOHN

**STREET, APPLICATION FOR OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BY LAW
AMENDMENT**

**TO PERMIT A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT THAT INCLUDES FOUR
RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS WITH HEIGHTS OF 9,10, 12, AND 24
STOREYS, ON A SHARED TWO-STOREY PODIUM AND GROUND
FLOOR COMMERCIAL USES, AND 723 APARTMENT UNITS AT
NORTHEAST CORNER OF JOHN STREET AND LESLIE STREET,
MUNICIPALLY KNOWN AS 2300 JOHN STREET (WARD 1), FILE NO.
PLAN 21 146653 000 (10.3, 10.5)**

The Public Meeting this date was to consider an application submitted by Primont Homes (Leslie/John) Inc.

The Committee Clerk advised that 370 notices were mailed on October 29, 2024, and a Public Meeting sign was posted on October 25, 2024. There were 42 written submissions received regarding this proposal.

Rick Cefaratti, Acting Manager, Development, West District, provided a presentation regarding the proposal, the location, surrounding uses and outstanding issues.

Darrin Cohen, Weston Consulting, provided a presentation on the proposed development.

The following deputations were made on the proposed development:

1. Edith Kangas expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that it is difficult to enter and exit the subject lands safely due to its only entrance being located in close proximity to the Leslie and John intersection that often gets backed up with traffic; that the number of traffic accidents has significantly increased at the Leslie and John Street intersection; that it is the preferred route for emergency vehicles to access residents living in the community; many commuters take John Street to avoid Steeles Avenue when exiting Hwy 404; that this and other high density developments affect the entire Thornhill community; questioned if the tunnel design of the building was safe for pedestrians and cyclists; that future residents will turn right then make U-turns to avoid having to make a left turn; the additional traffic congestion that it will create; that the closest grocery store is 2 KM away; questioned where people would park if adequate parking is not provided; and that the proposal is denser than the original application for the subject lands which was rejected by the community. Ms. Kangas advised that the proposal should not overshadow or inhibit the privacy of the neighbouring community.
2. Philip Simms, representing the Lyndurst and Tanglewood Ratepayers Association, expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that the maximum allowable height in the area should not exceed 8 stories and that the proposal includes a 24-storey tower; that the subject lands are being rezoned from

- commercial to residential usages; that the proposal does not include enough green space; that it will worsen traffic congestion and make it harder for emergency vehicles to reach residents; that the intersection of John and Leslie Street is already problematic and that the proposal will make it worse; that the traffic study was conducted during COVID; that the current sewer system may not be able to support the proposal; that the notice was not sent to more residents; that the demand for condominiums is decreasing due to high interest rates. That the Lyndurst and Tanglewood Ratepayers Association recommended that Council reject the proposal as presented. A petition of 1062 residents was submitted by the Ratepayers Association in opposition of the development.
3. Alex Ga spoke in opposition to the proposed development, expressing the following concerns: that the schools are already operating at full capacity and cannot absorb a development of this size; that traffic on John will worsen when it is already congested in this area; that there are too many large scale developments being proposed in the area; that the road network cannot handle a development of this size due to there being no eastbound entrance to the 407 on Leslie Street and for other factors; that there is not enough playground or medical services to serve a development of this size; that emergency vehicles will not be able to reach residents in the area in a timely fashion due to the extra traffic the proposal will create; and that the development will cause chaos in the community.
 4. Melanie Buckler expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the location is not suitable for a large-scale development; the towers should not be greater than 6 stories in height due to already problematic traffic congestion and accidents in the area; that there is no safe access to the subject lands; that it will overwhelm existing community infrastructure, such as the park; and that residents living in the building will need to own a vehicle as the closest grocery store is 2 KM away. Ms. Buckler suggested updating the retail in the plaza rather than redeveloping the plaza or restricting the height of the tower to 6 or 7 stories.
 5. Judith Amoils expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the change in the usage of the subject lands from retail and offices to residential; that the development will likely not include affordable housing units or purpose built rentals; the challenges entering and exiting the subject lands; the proposal is too large for the subject lands; the proposal is unattractive and does not fit in with the character of the community; the proposal will benefit the developer but not the existing community; and that it is likely not to include larger units suitable for families.
 6. Changzh Yang expressed opposition to the development proposal, identifying the following concerns: the height of proposed 24 storey tower; the additional traffic and car accidents it will create when both are already problematic; that the existing

- infrastructure cannot handle a development of this scale; and that sustainable low-rise development would be more suitable in this location. Changzh Yang encouraged the Applicant to reconsider their application.
7. Gerald Diner, Past President of the German Mills Residents Association, expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that John Street will not be able to handle the additional traffic; the problems entering and exiting the subject lands; and that the scale of the development does not fit the character of the community. Mr. Diner advised that the size of the development should be restricted to what is permitted under the City's Official Plan.
 8. Alicia Gao expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the traffic it will create; that there will be a greater number of traffic related accidents; the disruption the construction of the condos will cause to the community; that the community park will be overused; that the Community Centre and other City infrastructure will be overused; that the schools will become overcrowded; the loss of local retail that will occur; that the current transit system is not sufficient to support development; and that condominiums do not fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.
 9. Keith Opatowski spoke in opposition of the proposed development, expressing concern that developers were gaining too much power in society. He suggested that the City expropriate the land and purchase it for green space.
 10. Ella Lin expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that it does not comply with the City's Official Plan; that emergency vehicles will have trouble accessing the development due to traffic and there being only one entrance which is too close to the intersection of John and Leslie Street; that the subject lands are hard to get in and out of; that the proposal could overload existing City services and infrastructure; and that it does not reflect the character of the existing community. Ms. Lin recommended that Council reject the development proposal.
 11. Jason Chan, spoke in opposition to the proposed development, expressing the following concerns: 1062 residents signed a petition in opposition to the proposed development; the impact it would have on traffic patterns, particularly during peak times; that the traffic study was conducted during COVID; the excessive height and density of the proposal; that the City's infrastructure does not have the capacity to support the proposal; that a 24-storey tower would overwhelm the existing streetscape; that it does not fit the character of the community; that there is not sufficient open space and recreational amenities to support the proposal; the lack of transparency regarding by-law exceptions; and environmental concerns, such a proximity of the proposal to the CN Rail corridor, potential soil contamination from previous use, the impact of the proposal on the tree canopy and wildlife, and the

- increased pollution from additional traffic. Mr. Chan asked Council to reject the proposal as presented and requested the Applicant to submit a new traffic study and hold meaningful consultations.
12. Wei Wei supported the comments from the previous deputants and expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the height of the proposal; the traffic congestion the proposal will create; and that it will not benefit the existing community.
 13. Lilian Lityack, long term resident, advised that she understands that development needs to occur, but that they should not destabilize existing communities. Ms. Lityack expressed particular concern regarding the impact the proposal would have on traffic, and Simonston Park.
 14. Matthew Cohen shared some of the concerns of the other deputants, such as the 24 stories being too tall and that traffic will be awful. However, he suggested midrise stories from 6-12 stories are needed and may be appropriate on the subject lands if transit can be improved to support the development as it encourages less people to drive to get around. Further stating that it is not realistic to build townhouses on the subject lands at this point in time. Rather he suggested that a mixed-use development with a grocery store may be suitable for the subject lands and that the developer be required to invest in making community improvements, like adding a playground or contributing to educational requirements for the community.
 15. Marc Salsky supported the comments of the other deputations and expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that the location is not appropriate; that only residents within a 200-metre radius were notified; and that the proposal should be re-submitted to reflect the permitted zoning for the subject lands. Mr. Salsky suggested that Council should reject the proposal in its current format.
 16. Victor Shi expressed the following concerns regarding the development proposal: that current transit system does not support this type of density, noting that the buses come every 40 minutes to this area; and that the road system cannot support the proposal as there is already considerable traffic congestion at the intersection of Leslie and John Street.
 17. Fan Zhang expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that the towers should not be permitted to be greater than eight stories in height; the entrance to proposal is problematic due to its proximity to the intersection and three other entrances; the proposal is too aggressive; and that the proposal would be more appropriate in a downtown area. Ms. Zhang suggested Council should not approve the proposal.
 18. Mark Van Held expressed concern regarding the proposal.

19. Kimberly Seymour spoke in opposition to the proposed development, expressing the following concerns: the height and density of the proposal; that the subject lands are not safe or suitable for such a large proposal due it being challenging entering and exiting the lands; that it does not fit the character of the area; that the buses do not run frequently in the area and that the subject lands have a low walkability and transit score; that it will negatively affect the park; that the birds from the nearby meadow may hit the windows of the towers; and that it may impact the wildlife that frequently travels in this area. Ms. Seymour suggested that the City purchase the subject lands and transform it into a recreational block that would have three entrances.
20. Raj Puri expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: that the intersection of John and Leslie is already problematic due there being many traffic accidents and lots of congestion; that the by-law should not be amended to permit for shared visitors and commercial parking; that the schools would not be able to accommodate a development of this scale; the height of the towers, especially the tower that is proposed to be 24 stories; and that the proposal does not make sense in this area.
21. Hasan Haqvi expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the height of the proposed development, suggesting that birds may hit the glass windows due to there being many birds in the community as the subject lands reside near the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat; that it would not be prudent to build a high-rise on lands that are not stable; and that it will take away from the character and beauty of the community.
22. Tony Chan expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development: the high density of the proposal; that the height of the towers has increased from the original proposal; that it will worsen already bad traffic congestion on Leslie and John Street; that it will increase the number of traffic collisions at the intersection of John and Leslie Street; and that it will impact his property value.

Councillor Keith Irish agreed with most of the comments from the written submissions and deputations.

Members of Council provided the following feedback on the proposed development:

- Thanked residents for their comments and the Applicant for wanting to work with the City.
- Expressed particular concern regarding the problematic location of the subject lands, especially with respect to entering and exiting the lands as there is only one entrance that is frequently blocked by traffic congestion.
- Questioned the timelines of the proposal.

- Expressed concern regarding the additional traffic the proposal would create as John Street is heavily travelled, especially during peak times.
- Expressed concern that a high-rise development is being proposed in the middle of a low-rise community.
- Recognized that the plaza will be redeveloped, and that rejuvenation of the plaza is likely not feasible.
- Recognized that the condominium complex across the street was built at a different time and that it is not responsible for it to be replicated today.
- That current road network cannot support additional vehicles.
- That the traffic study needs to be updated as it was conducted during COVID.
- Questioned if the proposal could be serviced by the current water and wastewater system;
- That future residents of the proposal would only be able to turn right out of the proposal.
- That emergency services may have difficulty accessing the proposal.
- Questioned why the plaza is empty or not in operation at this time.
- Questioned if the School Board expressed any concerns regarding the proposal.
- Questioned the size of proposed condo units.

Staff advised that there is water and wastewater capacity to support the proposal, and that neither the School Board nor Fire and Emergency Services have provided any concern regarding the proposal at this point in the application process.

The Applicant responded to inquiries from the public and Committee. A new traffic study has been submitted to the City and is being reviewed by staff. An alternative access design can be explored for the development proposal. The size of the condos and whether the proposal will include affordable housing units or purpose-built rental is still to be determined. The Applicant agreed to reach out to the owner to find out the reason for leaving the plaza empty at this time.

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish

Seconded by Regional Councillor Jim Jones

1. **That the written submissions by Alexandre Thibault, Cate Lee, Cuifen Yang, Yang Chen, Carsten Weitenmeyer, Thornhill Ratepayers (consisting of Phillip E. Simms & Linda M. McQuade, Rand Winder & Jylan Khalis, Diana Dahnz, Bonnie Ma, Cathy Gao, JunJun Zhang, Bryan Talbot, Gerald Lewy, Julia & Daniel Chan, Krista & Harry Olins, Maggie Wong, Jane Mo, Betty Wong, Michelle Tang, Trung Ngo, Madhu Patel, Cathy Haghghat, Grace Cale, Iskander Boulos, Jason Chan, Judith Kyrinis, Liling Xiang, Max Kaufman, Saleh Jaleen, Yasmine Dossal & Neda Jaleel, Shabnam Balamchi, Shari Kaufman, Teresa Chan, Agnes & Jerry Bleiwas, Don Macfarlane, Igor Nikolajev, Alireza Mokhtari, Gail & John Lavery, Lisa Chung, Michael Ni;**

Mojtaba Kashfi; Nubia Soda; Peter Young; Phillip E. Simms; Pretoria Davis; Ruth Bloom; Shahab Ghorashi; Yogesh Desai, be received; and,

2. **That the deputations by Edith Kangas, Seymour Basch, Philip Simms, Alex Ga, Melanie Buckler, Judith Amoils, Changzh Yang, Gerald Diner, Alicia Gao, Keith Opatowski, Ella Lin, Jason Chan, Wei Wei, Lillian Litvack, Matthew Cohen, Marc Salsky, Victor Shi, Fan Zhang, Mark Van Helden, Kimberly Seymour, Raj Puri, Hasan Haqvi, Tony Chan, be received; and,**
3. That the Report entitled, "PUBLIC MEETING INFORMATION REPORT, Applications by Primont Homes (Leslie/John) Inc., for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit a mixed-use high-rise development at 2300 John Street, File No. PLAN 21 146653 (Ward 1)", be received; and,
4. That the Record of the Public Meeting held on November 19, 2024, with respect to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit a mixed-use high-rise development at 2300 John Street, File No. PLAN 21 146653, be received; and further,
5. That the Applications by Primont Homes (Leslie/John) Inc., to amend the Markham Official Plan 2014 and Zoning By-laws 2571 and 2024-19, as amended, be referred back to staff for a report and recommendation to evaluate the proposal.

Carried

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Development Services Public Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.