

October 13, 2015

**Members of Council**  
**c/o Ms. Kitty Bavington,**  
Clerks Department  
City of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario  
L3R 9W3

**MGP File: 15-2430**

Dear Mayor Scarpitti and Members of Council:

**RE: Response to Councillor Jones' Proposed Motion**  
**Council Agenda Item 7(1)- Proposed Re-Development of the Unionville Homes Society Area**

We are land use planners to Minto Communities Canada ("Minto"). Minto has recently entered into a partnership with Unionville Homes Society ("UHS") and the Region of York with respect to the re-development of the UHS lands, municipally known as 4300 Highway 7, located on the north side of Highway 7, west of the CN Railway (the "UHS Property").

We are writing in response to Item 7(1)- Proposed Re-development of the Unionville Homes Society Area and the amended motion tabled by Councillor Jones.

**Previous Submission to Address Councillor Jones' Motion**

We previously submitted correspondence dated September 21, 2015 to address Councillor Jones' previous motion on the Unionville Homes Society Area. While we appreciate Councillor Jones' concerns, our opinions outlined in the September 21, 2015 letter remain valid and we continue to maintain that a staff report on the UHS lands is not warranted and would only serve to delay the project unnecessarily. A copy of our September letter is attached.

In short, our September 21, 2015 submission noting the following:

**1. UHS is currently operating as an "Elder Friendly Community"**

It is our opinion that the UHS lands are currently operating as an Elder Friendly Community, providing a variety of housing options for seniors and services. The proposed redevelopment will more than double the existing rental units in a brand new building best equipped to serve the next generation of seniors. The re-development of the UHS lands directly supports the Region's and City's current policy initiatives to provide affordable housing. Further, we do not understand the implications of calling UHS an Elder

Friendly Community.

**2. *Proposed re-development will increase the site density and further support existing transit***

Secondly, the addition of a multi-storey building and medium density residential market housing will significantly increase the density of the UHS Property and further support Markham's transit policies, create transit supportive densities and support existing bus transit along this segment of Hwy 7.

**3. *The City's new Official Plan requires the submission of a Comprehensive Block Plan***

The new Official Plan contains a policy (section 8.2.4.5) which requires the submission of a comprehensive block plan for any application for development on lands larger than 1.0 hectare (2.47 acres). The policy requires a block plan to guide, among other things, the appropriate mix of uses, height and density, the layout of streets and development blocks, location of parks, a proposed system of movement including pedestrian, cycling and transit movements. The required Block Plan will serve as a means to evaluate the overall development plan and its relationship with adjacent lands and the broader community to ensure no adverse impacts on the existing stable residential neighbourhoods. Given that the UHS property exceeds the 1.0 hectare threshold, a Block Plan will be prepared as part of future development applications. This Block Plan will function as an informal study of the UHS Property and its relationship and interface with surrounding lands.

**Councillor Jones' Amended Motion- Parkland**

We note that Councillor Jones' motion appears to have been amended to include a request that *"...staff investigate the title of the park property to determine how the park lands can become a City Park"*. It is our opinion that this is a matter that can be discussed and addressed through the development approvals process.

Given all of the above, we maintain our position that additional study of the UHS Property by Staff at this time is not warrant as all of the issued outlined by Councillor Jones will be addressed in a future staff report on the development applications and block plan.

We look forward to working cooperatively with Members of Council and City of Markham staff to secure the respective development approvals to deliver affordable seniors housing in the Region and City. Should you wish to discuss this letter in greater detail, please feel free to contact me at 905 513 0170.

Yours very truly,

**MALONE GIVEN PARSONS LTD.**



Don Given, MCIP, RPP

President

[dgiven@mgp.ca](mailto:dgiven@mgp.ca)

Attachment: Letter to Members of Development Services Committee dated September 21, 2015

cc: Members of Markham Council  
Mr. Jim Baird, City of Markham  
Minto Communities Canada  
Unionville Homes Society

September 21, 2015

**Members of Development Services Committee**  
**c/o Ms. Kitty Bavington,**  
Clerks Department  
City of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario  
L3R 9W3

*MGP File:* 15-2430

Dear Member of Development Services Committee:

**RE: Response to Councillor Jones' Proposed Motion**  
**Agenda Item 18.0- Proposed Re-Development of the Unionville Area**  
**September 22, 2015 Markham Development Services Committee**

We are land use planners to Minto Communities Canada ("Minto"). Minto has recently entered into a partnership with Unionville Homes Society ("UHS") and the Region of York with respect to the re-development of the UHS lands, municipally known as 4300 Highway 7, located on the north side of Highway 7, west of the CN Railway (the "UHS Property"). The proposed re-development plan will provide a minimum of 200 new additional affordable seniors housing units and introduce modest market residential units to the UHS Lands.

We are writing in response to Item 18.0- Proposed Re-development of Unionville Area and the motion tabled by Councillor Jones. We are concerned with the request for staff to prepare a report on the UHS Lands. It is our opinion that a staff report is not warranted at this time.

**Proposed Re-Development of the UHS Property**

Minto and York Region were selected to assist with the re-development of the UHS Property. As you may know, UHS provides housing (social and long term care) and services for seniors in a campus format on its 18 acre parcel.

The first phase of re-development will include the construction of a multi-storey building with a minimum of 200 affordable senior housing units which will ultimately be owned and operated by York Region. These new units will replace the existing 92 rental bungalows for independent seniors (being Heritage Village). Heritage Village was constructed in 1978 and requires significant (and costly) repairs.

The second phase of re-development will include medium density market residential uses on the portion of the UHS Property previously occupied by Heritage Village.

Minto is currently working closely with York Region and UHS on a master plan and detailed plans for the multi-storey building and market residential housing. We anticipate that development applications will be filed in early 2016 and will work closely with City staff to deliver new affordable seniors housing, a significant public benefit to the local community.

### **Response to Councillor Jones' Motion**

While we are supportive of many of the same principles outlined in Councillor Jones's motion such as increased population growth for Markham and supporting transit friendly densities, we are concerned with the request that *"...staff prepare a report for Council to consider how the Unionville lands in the study area can be developed as an Elder Friendly Community\*, fully integrated with Mainstreet Unionville, Highway 7, with an increase in density so it can help to support a Smart Track enhanced transit station stop at Highway 7 to serve this new community and the larger area"*. It is our opinion that the request for staff to prepare a report for these lands is unnecessary for the following reasons.

#### **1. UHS is currently operating as an "Elder Friendly Community"**

Firstly, UHS is currently operating as an "Elder Friendly Community". UHS provides a variety of housing options for seniors and offers a range of services which includes, among others, access to 24 hour medical care, meals, housekeeping and recreational activities and therapy. The current program allows seniors to age in place and utilize services as needed. The re-development plan will not alter this concept. Moreover, the redevelopment plans will more than double the existing rental units in a brand new building best equipped to serve the next generation of seniors. The re-development of the UHS lands directly supports the Region's and City's current policy initiatives to provide affordable housing.

#### **2. Proposed re-development will increase the site density and further support existing transit**

Secondly, the addition of a multi-storey building and medium density residential market housing will significantly increase the density of the UHS Property and further support Markham's transit policies, create transit supportive densities and support existing bus transit along this segment of Hwy 7.

#### **3. The City's new Official Plan requires the submission of a Comprehensive Block Plan**

In addition, the City's recently adopted Official Plan (2014) designates the UHS Property "Residential Mid Rise" and permits a variety of housing forms, including medium density and multi-storey buildings up to 6 storeys and a maximum density of 2.0 Floor Space Index. These policies represent the City's most recent vision for the UHS Property and this segment of the Hwy 7 corridor. Furthermore, the new Official Plan contains a policy (section 8.2.4.5) which requires the submission of a comprehensive block plan for any application for development on lands larger than 1.0 hectare (2.47 acres). The policy requires a block plan to guide, among other things, the appropriate mix of uses, height and density, the

layout of streets and development blocks, location of parks, a proposed system of movement including pedestrian, cycling and transit movements. The required Block Plan will serve as a means to evaluate the overall development plan and its relationship with adjacent lands and the broader community to ensure no adverse impacts on the existing stable residential neighbourhoods. Given that the UHS property exceeds the 1.0 hectare threshold, a Block Plan will be prepared as part of future development applications. This Block Plan will function as an informal study of the UHS Property and its relationship and interface with surrounding lands.

Given all of the above, it is our opinion that additional study of the UHS Property by Staff is not warrant and rather represents a duplication of efforts.

We look forward to working cooperatively with the City of Markham to secure the respective development approvals to deliver affordable seniors housing in the Region and City. Should you wish to discuss this letter in greater detail, please feel free to contact me at 905 513 0170.

Yours very truly,

**MALONE GIVEN PARSONS LTD.**



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President  
[dgiven@mgp.ca](mailto:dgiven@mgp.ca)

cc: Mr. Jim Baird, City of Markham  
Minto Communities Canada  
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