



MINUTES THORNHILL AREA REVITALIZATION WORKING GROUP

Monday, June 9, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, Markham Civic Centre

Attendance

Council Committee Members

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath
Regional Councillor Jim Jones
Regional Councillor Gord Landon
Regional Councillor Joe Li
Councillor Valerie Burke
Councillor Howard Shore – Chair

Residential Representatives

Brian Gordon
Srdjana Jaksic
Michael Lee
Larry Newstadt
Arnold Rose

Regrets

Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Business Representatives

Michael Dankevy
Lorne Kumer
Brian Magee
Angela Papapetrou
Paul Zammit

Staff

Ron Blake, Manager, West District
Kitty Bavington, Council/Committee Coordinator

Thornhill Revitalization Area City-Initiated Area and Site Specific Official Plan Policies and Zoning By-Law Amendment

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group convened at 7:05 p.m. with Councillor Howard Shore presiding as Chair.

1. Disclosure of Interest

Councillor Valerie Burke disclosed an interest with respect to the Thornhill Revitalization Study by nature of having a family owned business in the Thornhill area, and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this matter.

2. Minutes – April 28, 2014

It was noted that Item # 2 requires the Business Representatives' Position Paper to be presented at the meeting and does not require it to be provided prior to the meeting.

Moved by: Regional Councillor Gord Landon
Seconded by: Brian Magee

That the Minutes of the Thornhill Revitalization Work Group meeting held April 28, 2014, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. New Business

A Working Group member brought forward new business, regarding the appointment of the Chair. The Chair ruled this motion out of order as the Chair was appointed by Council and the appointment would have to be amended by Council.

3. Position Papers

Residents' Position Paper and Response by the Business Owners' Position Paper

The Group discussed the scope of the Working Group's mandate, and reviewed the July 9, 2013 directions of Council. Staff discussed options for moving forward in a different direction with respect to Council's direction. If not within the specific mandate, clarification is necessary from DSC or Council. Discussions included the impact of the draft motion before Council on June 11. The motion would initiate a major study for the area that would potentially fulfill the original mandate of this Working Group.

The Position Papers were presented and discussed.

- some improvements to the area were noted, and the residents are asking the businesses to confirm the improvements that will be made
- the business and residential representative have had discussions outside of the WG meetings, and the businesses reiterated their position that they will not agree to removal of any uses currently permitted by the Zoning By-law, despite their current use being protected thru site-specific zoning
- residents do not support keeping all of the existing permitted uses in the zoning by-law
- the businesses clarified that they are not asking for the new "up-zoning" uses – the residents are proposing these uses. The businesses are satisfied with the existing permitted uses but do not object to new "up-zoning" uses
- definition of revitalization is "change for the better" so changes should be supported
- businesses want to protect their lands
- residents demands for "quality of life" is not clear
- WG discussions have progressed to acknowledge that existing uses continue while recognizing that the neighbourhood has a right to evolve from an industrial feel
- there have been instances of racing motorcycles in the area, and noise from the industries late in the evenings and on weekends
- similar noise nuisances are experienced in residential areas, not just industrial areas
- it was suggested that the residents were aware of the industrial uses when they bought their homes
- it was suggested that on-going and stricter By-law enforcement is needed in these instances

The businesses summarized their position:

- keep all existing uses and will accept an overlay of new uses
- need to provide for alternate uses in case an existing business fails – protect the properties, not just the business
- retain as-of-right zoning so that properties are not devalued
- agree to continue on with the Working Group and to work with residents to police and improve the area
- support long-term study

Concern was expressed that businesses may be prohibited from future industrial uses that are not even thought of yet – who knows how the businesses will evolve - so it is preferable not to restrict the range of uses currently permitted by the Zoning By-law. For example, the new Mercedes use would have been prohibited if the proposed by-law had passed last year.

The Group agreed that they want a vision for the area, and the proposed study would be good for planning purposes. Piecemeal development should be avoided, to ensure the area is attractive for redevelopment. The Chair reiterated that Council had already passed a 'vision' document presented by the initial Working Group in March, 2013. 'Grandfathering' of existing uses and the previously proposed by-law provisions were discussed. The redesignation of the Canac site to residential use is appropriate as it is adjacent to existing residential uses and provides a buffer.

The following Positions were debated:

Position #1: Current legal uses may continue as ~~grandfathered uses~~. **Agreed**

Position #2: Current legal uses may expand as long as they comply with zoning and appropriate other permissions and ~~require no new environmental approvals~~. **Disagreed - More discussion**

Position #3: No new auto related and manufacturing uses in the area will be permitted.

Disagreed - More discussion

Position #4: No outdoor storage will be permitted. (currently only permitted in a few places)

Agreed

Position #5: Business and property owners must comply with existing by-laws and legislation.

Agreed and noted that they must also comply with property standards and other applicable legislation

The Group agreed that progress has been made this meeting, and a review of the Position Papers will continue at the next meeting.

4. Motion from April 28, 2014

The Committee discussed the progress made this evening and considered deferring the motion from April 28 to a future meeting, and whether it would assist the Council when debating the Notice of Motion on June 11.

Moved by: Brian Magee

Seconded by: Lorne Kumer

That the following motion, deferred from April 28, 2014, be further deferred to a future meeting:

That the Thornhill Revitalization Working Group makes the following recommendations:

A – Leave current zoning in place with some site specific exceptions to recognize long standing uses

B – Clarify the definition of “Outside Storage” to support by-law enforcement

C – Work on a study to designate the area as a mixed use transit-based area.

D – Working group to stay in place to provide guidance – address neighbourhood concerns.

CARRIED

Adjournment

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group adjourned at 9:30 p.m.