



MINUTES **THORNHILL AREA REVITALIZATION WORKING GROUP**

Monday, March 17, 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre

Attendance

Council Committee Members

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath
Regional Councillor Jim Jones
Regional Councillor Gord Landon
Regional Councillor Joe Li
Councillor Howard Shore

Residential Representatives

Brian Gordon
Srdjana Jaksic
Michael Lee
Larry Newstadt
Arnold Rose

Regrets

Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Councillor Valerie Burke

Business Representatives

Michael Dankev
Lorne Kumer
Angela Papapetrou
Paul Zammit

Staff

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

Regrets

Brian Magee

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

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group convened at 6:34 p.m. with Councillor Howard Shore presiding as Chair.

1. Disclosure of Interest – None Declared

2. Minutes – February 24, 2014

Moved by: Brian Gordon
Seconded by: Michael Lee

That the Minutes of the Thornhill Revitalization Work Group meeting held February 24, 2014, be adopted.

CARRIED

3. Zoning Strategies

As a follow up to the last meeting, staff was asked to bring zoning strategies to provide for new land uses in the area with restrictions on new manufacturing and auto body/auto repair, while recognizing zoning permissions for existing manufacturing and auto-repair uses. Future initiatives will include a visioning exercise proposal, CIP/BIA options, and a program to engage the community in property maintenance issues.

Staff gave a PowerPoint presentation to review the By-law presented on July 9, 2013 and the directions from Council as a starting point to develop strategies. The strategies will provide for new land uses in the area and recognize zoning permissions for existing manufacturing and auto-repair uses and apply restrictions on new manufacturing and auto body/auto repair uses. The presentation reviewed industrial uses, auto body/repair uses, “higher order” commercial uses (offices, retail restaurants and the like), “sensitive uses” (places of worship, day cares, private schools etc) and “prohibited uses” (service stations, hotels, funeral homes, etc.) and discussed strategic options for the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law regulations.

The gradation of land use permissions were outlined: as of right uses, discretionary, and prohibited.

The following options were presented and discussed:

Industrial

Option 1: Goal - Permit existing uses only

Option 2: Goal - Permit existing uses and new uses subject to Zoning Amendment based on Official Plan criteria (such as noise, vibration, traffic impact, compatibility, MOE Environmental Clearance Approvals, etc.)

Up-zoning was suggested, with the observation that changing industrial to commercial uses may require higher parking requirements

Auto Repair/Auto Body Uses (and commercial storage)

Goal: Permit these uses on properties where they currently exist. No zoning permissions for these uses on other properties.

- To what extent is outdoor storage essential to the operations of auto repair/auto body uses and how should vehicle storage be addressed in the zoning bylaw, and should restrictions be place of the expansion of existing uses?
- Existing outdoor storage prohibition as it relates to other uses was not considered an issue
- Plated/unplated vehicles, short term parking, or storage? Screened or covered?
- Scrap yard effect is offensive and should be cleaned up and enforced by the City
- Suggested By-law enforcement could be enforcing many of the existing situations
- Suggested an off-site collective storage site could be facilitated by a BIA
- Consensus that clunkers need to be removed and enforced
- Vermin attracted to junk yard as well as grocery store garbage bins
- Clarification required for definitions of scrap yard and parking
- Statistics are needed on how many junkers there are, to determine the extent of the problem before defining the by-law

- Providing affordable services means businesses may not be able to afford extensive improvements

Goal: Permit commercial uses

- Restrictions on large stand alone retail uses (not on interior roads?)
- Limited total floor area per property
- Retail uses limited to 50 % floor area in multiple unit buildings

Goal: Require zoning amendment for sensitive uses

- Caution that sensitive uses in zoning by-law may not be compatible with MOE approved uses and cause the industrial use to end.

Goal: Prohibit: outdoor storage, service stations, car wash, hotels, funeral homes, night clubs

- do not exist now and are not considered desirable

The Chair noted that revitalization of the area will be an organic process evolving over time and that the By-law is a necessary first step.

The Committee had lengthy discussions on the options and how to proceed. It was noted that conversions from employment use require comprehensive review, and that permitting additional residential uses would increase the risk of more incompatibility. The Committee discussed issues relating to a comprehensive review and Master Plan study for the area, to consider a potential future GO Train stop and related intensification.

Staff suggested that Option 1 is easier to work with and promote, but the advantage of Option 2 is that you are establishing a criteria for future applications.

The Committee discussed the following key questions and directed staff accordingly:

1. *Should there be an outright prohibition on new industrial uses or should the OP establish review criteria, subject to a Zoning Amendment?* – **there was a mix of opinions on these options**
2. *Should restrictions be placed on the expansion of existing auto repair uses?* - **yes**
3. *How should outdoor storage that's accessory to existing auto repair uses be addressed in the new Zoning By-law?* – **more info from By-law Enforcement**
4. *Should floor area restrictions be placed on new retail uses?* – **use restrictions for Big Box; will also be subject to traffic impact study**

The Committee also directed the following actions:

- staff to prepare recommendations, including wording of a proposed By-law and language toward the site-specific zoning to address the concerns of existing businesses in the auto body maintenance and repair sector as well as those in the manufacturing sector;
- staff to provide clearer definition of outdoor storage and how it relates to auto body/repair
- Economic Development staff to provide recommendations for BIA/CIP
- residents to survey area to get number of derelict cars and provide the info at the next meeting

The Residents' Representatives distributed a written vision statement for future discussions. Both representative groups agreed to meet for discussions prior to the next Working Group meeting.

4. Next Steps

The next meeting will be April 28, 2014.

Adjournment

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group adjourned at 9:05 p.m.