



MINUTES
THORNHILL AREA REVITALIZATION
WORKING GROUP
2012-05-16
Canada Room

Attendance

Members of Council

Councillor Howard Shore

Staff:

Ron Blake, Manager Development West

Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator

Residents

Manuel Der Maroutiounian, Bayview Steeles
Auto Collision

Paul Gotz

Srdjana Jaksic

Arnie Rose

Paul Zammit

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group convened at 7:35 p.m. with Councillor Howard Shore presiding as Chair.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a discussion on whether the document circulated at the last meeting should be referred to as confidential or internal.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of March 28, 2012 Thornhill Revitalization Minutes be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

2. RECAP OF APRIL 25, 2012 TOWN HALL MEETING

There was a discussion on the Town Hall Meeting regarding the revitalization of the Thornhill area. The meeting provided the public with options for the Thornhill revitalization area (e.g. land use options). Topics of discussion at the meeting included: (1) the redevelopment of the Canac Kitchen site; (2) the impact on employment in the area and where the jobs will go; and (3) the impact on adjacent residential neighbourhoods in the area.

3. QUESTIONS TO PLANNING STAFF

Mr. Ron Blake, Manager Development West, was in attendance to answer any planning related questions.

A member questioned if outdoor storage is currently permitted in the Thornhill revitalization area. It was advised that outdoor storage is not permitted by the current Zoning By-law but that outdoor storage may be considered a legal non-conforming use if the business existed prior to 1973 when the current zoning was adopted.

The Committee questioned how its recommendations would be brought forward to Council for its consideration. It was reported that the Committee's recommendations would be compiled into a memorandum, which would be included with the staff report being brought forward to the Development Services Committee (DSC). There was discussion as to whether the Working Group Report would be a separate and distinct document from any staff report and whether it would be brought forward at the same time as the staff report. It was confirmed that this Committee will have an opportunity to approve its recommendations prior to finalizing the memorandum. The report is being targeted to be brought forward to DSC in early fall.

The Committee questioned when the staff report would be available for public viewing. It was advised that the Development Service Agenda, which includes a link to the staff report, is posted on the website the Thursday afternoon prior to the meeting.

It was questioned if there would be a Development Services Public Meeting on the plans for the Thornhill revitalization area. It was confirmed that there will be a public meeting and that notice will be provided to residents and businesses within a certain radius of the area and to those individuals who registered at the Town Hall Meeting. Members of the public will be able to make a deputation on the plans at this time.

It was clarified that Council will make the final decision regarding the plans for the Thornhill revitalization area.

The Committee requested that the presentation provided at the Town Hall Meeting be posted on the website for public viewing.

There was a question why retirement homes are not considered places of employment. Staff advised that in order for a business to be deemed a place of employment in Markham it must fall into one of the Regions designated employment uses (industrial-related, commercial-related or community-related). It was further clarified that despite assisted-living retirement facilities having employees, such a facility is considered 'institutional' use and not 'Employment' as defined by the Provincial Places to Grow policy statement.

It was clarified that any changes to the permitted land use in the area would not affect existing businesses and that any loss of employment in area would need to be relocated elsewhere in Markham.

It was noted that Councillor Howard Shore had volunteered to attend the Aileen-Willowbrook Ratepayer's Association Annual General Meeting in order to answer questions regarding the preliminary plans for the Thornhill revitalization area and to meet with the spokesperson of the Association on other occasions.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION WORKING GROUP POSITION

Each Committee Member provided their vision for the Thornhill revitalization area:

Srdjana Jaksic

- Cleaning up the land uses in the area;
- Having greater enforcement of Markham by-laws within the area;
- Improving the appearance/function of auto shops in the area (e.g. less cars parked in front of auto shops);
- Having greater continuity with respect to the design of the area;
- Having greater respect of employment uses in the area;
- Mixed land use;

Arnie Rose

- Establishing a Thornhill business village;
- Mixed land use;
- Creating additional purposes for people to come to the area;
- Creating a certain look/feel for the area;
- Having more environmental uses of the land;

Manuel Der Hartounian

- Cleaning up of the area;
- Changing the industrial zoning of the area to allow other businesses types to open (mixed land use);
- Having residents and businesses work together to find solutions;
- Revoking the business licenses of businesses that fail to comply with legal land uses;

Pau Gotz

- Cleaning up of the area;
- Rezoning of the area to commercial and residential;
- Creating a business village or corridor;

Paul Zammit

- Having a professional urban designer create a vision for the area that it is both visually appealing and functional.

5. REVIEW OF TOWN HALL PRESENTATION

The Committee reviewed the presentation provided at the Town Hall Meeting. It was recommended that the presentation be emailed to the Committee for them to review comprehensively. The Committee provided the following feedback with respect to the content of the presentation:

Slide 2 on Protecting the Environment

- Include information on how the environment will be protected;

Slide 6 on Distinct Zones

- Specify that these are geographic zones;
- Refer to the Canac Kitchen site as the former Canac Kitchen site;

Slide 7 on Potential business uses

- Add gas stations, car washes, retirement homes and dry cleaners (pick-up only);
- Remove vehicle sales;

Slide 8 on Existing business

- Request for notice to go to a larger radius than the 120 metres required by legislation when a existing legally nonconforming business makes an application through the Committee of Adjustment to expand its business beyond 10 percent;

Slide 9 on Compatibility

- Add a bullet with respect to environmental compatibility;
- Add a bullet about adhering to the highest legislative standard and encouraging the highest technical standard for light, noise and odour;
- Highlight the benefits of the land use changes to existing businesses;

Slide 11 on Prohibited Uses

- There was some concern regarding having a prohibited list, as it can create a gray area for land uses not included on either the prohibited or permitted list of land uses;
- Possibly add a clause to the prohibited list stating that any land use not included on the permitted land use list is prohibited;
- Add educational information for existing businesses on the changes to land use in the area and how it will affect their business;
- Add manufacturing as a prohibited land use.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Thornhill Revitalization Working Group adjourned at 9:47 p.m.