



MINUTES
ROUGE PARK IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW TASK FORCE
ONTARIO ROOM, MARKHAM CIVIC CENTRE
July 4, 2012

ATTENDANCE:

Members:

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Chair
Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Councillor Colin Campbell
Councillor Logan Kanapathi

Staff:

Andy Taylor, CAO
Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community Services
Trinela Cane, Commissioner of Corporate Services
Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning
David Pearce, Manager, Real Property
Graham Seaman, Sustainability Office Lead
Paul Wealleans, Director, Revenues
Elizabeth Wimmer, Senior Environmental Planner
Margaret Wouters, Manager, Policy & Research
Kitty Bavington, Council/Committee Coordinator

The meeting of the Rouge Park Implementation Review Task Force convened at the hour of 9:35 AM with Deputy Mayor Jack Heath in the Chair.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST – None declared

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

The Chair gave an overview of the purpose of the meeting – to facilitate discussions in preparation for the transfer of land from Markham to Parks Canada. In accordance with the Council resolution, the transfer of land has been endorsed, conditional upon the requirements of Markham being satisfied. The Committee and staff will work through the process over the summer to clarify the issues and determine the course for negotiations. It was requested that Ian Buchannan, York Region Representative, be invited to the next meeting(s).

Parks Canada is providing \$142 in funding: it is estimated that \$5 mil per year will be required for operations; therefore a significant portion of the remaining funds could be allocated for Markham projects, i.e. welcome center, etc.

The Committee began with discussions of the lands to be transferred, including the boundaries of the Park within Markham, and dealing with facilities and communities within the boundaries.

Graham Seaman introduced the cross-departmental staff team, and gave a presentation that outlined: background information; Parks Canada Study Area Map; and Markham properties. Staff described the National Park establishment process, Parks Canada land transfer process and update; ongoing stakeholder meetings, and the public consultation process. The Chair stated that Parks Canada's target of having the land transfer agreements signed by September 17, 2012, may not be feasible.

David Pearce outlined Markham's process for land disposal which includes a window for public notification. The Committee suggested a Public Meeting be held on the transfer, with Parks Canada in attendance and making a presentation. This would also facilitate public discussions on land and building ownership issues.

Staff presented the overall map of the Park and identified Markham lands, the valleylands, the middle reaches of the Little Rouge, and the tentative boundaries of the Park. The Chair noted that Parks Canada wants any lands which might be added to their study area to be contiguous to the lands already in the study area. This could include the main branch of the Little Rouge within the greenbelt, but excludes the tributaries within the white belt area. Land ownership by Markham, TRCA, ORC, and Transport Canada (Airport) were identified.

Discussions included:

- farmland areas north of Major Mackenzie Drive and potential pathways
- potential inclusion of Milne Park, the Rouge Valley lands between Milne and Bob Hunter Park, and other lands acquired in the development process
- valleylands are more significant for park purposes than farmlands
- valleylands north of Steeles Avenue are the most interesting feature, next to the Toronto valley features

It was noted that Parks Canada does not support acquiring private lands by purchase or expropriation however, the Committee is hopeful an M.O.U. between Markham and Parks Canada will provide an opportunity to develop the boundaries preferred by Markham over time, as a long-term strategy.

The Committee discussed the Markham-owned land intended for inclusion in the Park consisting of 300 acres within 9 parcels, and gave the following comments/directions:

Area 1 – Include it

Area 2 – Included

Area 3 - Included subject to ending the residential tenancy and determining where the agriculture tenant lives. The house is one of three in RNUP which belongs to Markham. The land and house are currently leased, although to different people. The residential tenant has been given notice to vacate by the end of the year, and staff were directed to pursue this matter with the tenant. Markham has offered to move the heritage house if Parks Canada / TRCA can find a nearby lot within the

park, subject to privatization as well. Markham's intention is to clear the valley lands of houses so the valleys are free of buildings, and has offered to pay a reasonable amount to help move this house onto a suitable lot. Agricultural issues will be dealt with more thoroughly in a later meeting.

Areas 4-6 - Included subject to pathway planning

Area 7 – Cedar Grove Community Centre is currently excluded. Discussion took place concerning whether it may be included in the park with an access agreement and continuation of community use. Further discussion are required. The Rouge Park Trails Masterplan identifies a primary and secondary trail in this park. Parking is existing in the park which will support future trail access. Parks Canada have suggested they will utilize the Trails Masterplan to inform future trail planning.

Area 8 – Markham had attempted to privatize one of these dwellings in the past. It was suggested that the excess land be severed from the houses and added to the community park and the houses be sold. It was noted that, with limited exceptions, severances are prohibited in the Greenbelt. Dealing with the community park was not resolved, staff will look into this further. No decision was made on how to proceed on the houses - this will be dealt with more thoroughly in a later meeting.

Area 9 – The west end of the Tompion lands are currently proposed to be used for the TTC/YRT bus loop; however, Markham considers there are more appropriate locations for this purpose. Staff were directed to consult with the Legal Department regarding the agreement (signed when Markham contributed funds to purchase the Tompion lands and transferred the lands to the TRCA) with respect to a requirement for consultation with Markham for changes in use of the land. Tompion lands are already included in the RNUP, but a bus loop would actually remove some of it from the RNUP.

3. NEXT STEPS

The following topics were referred to a future meeting: RPITF recommendations and other items for discussion; and the lands of interest to Markham. The list of items for discussion will include other issues that may arise. It was suggested that a bus tour of the properties be arranged.

Staff will advise of future meeting dates.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Rouge Park Implementation Review Task Force adjourned at 11:05 AM