

German Mills Meadow & Natural Habitat Liaison Committee
April 5, 2018
York Room
3:30 p.m.

<p><u>Committee Members</u> Deputy Mayor Jack Heath Councillor Valerie Burke Kimberly Seymour Bernard Sze Gail Lavery John Saul Jeffrey Safajou Don Macfarlane</p> <p><u>Regrets</u> None</p>	<p><u>Staff</u> Nory Takata, Parks Planner Robert Penner, Manager of Utilities Surveys & Assets Database Morgan Jones, Director, Operations Robert Marinzal, Technical Coordinator Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator</p>
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The German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat Liaison Committee convened at 3:02 pm with Kimberly Seymour presiding as Chair.

1. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Bernard Sze
Seconded by Gail Lavery

The Minutes from the October 18, 2018, German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat Liaison Committee were approved as presented.

Carried

2. Update of the Gas Line Repair

Robert Penner, Manager of Utilities Inspections and Surveys advised that the work on the gas line repair will be scheduled to be done in two stages from September 2018 to spring 2020. It is expected that the tender for the project will close in June 2018. The construction on the first stage is targeted to start after September 15, 2018.

The gas levels in the meadow were tested in February 2018 and no abnormal results were found. Environmental tests of the meadow were conducted in the fall of 2017. These results were consistent with historical data.

3. Update on Fill Project

Robert Penner advised that the timing of the fill project is still being determined. The cost per homeowner/participant will be based on the unit cost of the fill, which will be determined based on the outcome of the tender process. It was noted the slope could be reduced from 4:1 to 5:1 or 6:1 to help with mowing and erosion of soil from residents' property to Markham property. If the project is a success, the City may look at doing this again in the future.

4. Updates on sewer upgrade project, German Mills creek project

Phil Wolfrain, TRCA provided a presentation on the Sewer Upgrade Project for the German Mills Creek. A copy of the presentation will be circulated to the Members.

Potential cost sharing for a bridge rehabilitation has been flagged to City staff.

Staff asked if the Toronto Region & Conservation Authority (TRCA) is worried about the volatile organic compounds levels, as there are some ground level wells in the area. The TRCA will look into this matter.

The Committee asked about the type of trees and plants that will be planted on the pathway. Phil Wolfrain advised that the TRCA only plants native trees and shrubs.

5. Signage- Two New signs in Park, Customized Markham Signage

A picture of the new Markham signs was displayed to the Committee.

A Committee Member asked if the signs can be modified to show no smoking and-keeping dogs on leash. Staff did not think that smoking could be prohibited in the meadow under Markham's by-laws.

6. Public Notice Board-Parks Renaissance

A picture of the notice board to be put up in the meadow was displayed to the Committee.

7. Signage for bird breeding season-staying on path and dogs on leash

The Committee advised that signs will be put up in strategic points in the park during the bird breeding season asking park patrons to stay on the path. A picture of the sign was displayed to the Committee. A Committee Member suggested adding some sub-headings to the sign.

8. Dogs off leash during nesting season- Ontario Society of Prevention & Cruelty to Animals Patrol

The Committee requested that an Ontario Society of Prevention & Cruelty to Animals/By-Laws Officer could patrol the meadow on the north side of the river, as many dog owners have been taking their dogs off their leash. They also suggested that patrol and fine signs be erected. Staff agreed to ask for an officer to patrol the area, but could not guarantee that it will happen.

Staff to contact By-Laws regarding providing some type of authorization to citizens who wish to patrol the park on their own.

The Committee discussed how dog owners could be encouraged to keep their dogs on their leashes without having the area patrolled. A Member also suggested starting a Facebook site for dog owners in the German Mills Meadow's area to try and educate the residents on keeping their dogs on their leash.

A Member noted that he is also trying to start an off-leash park in the area.

9. Article Regarding Dogs and Habitat Could be Adopted by Markham

The Committee was encouraged to read an article on dog habitat that could possibly be adopted in Markham. The following link to the article was provided to the Committee. Laura Gold was asked to circulate the link to the Committee.

10. Paddock Park

Staff to ask By-Laws to enforce illegal parking and dog off-leash offences at Paddock Park.

11. 150 Grant

It was noted that funds received from the Canada 150 grant were used to build bird houses, buy a weed trimmer and on a small Canada Day Celebration.

12. Dog strangling vine-weed trimmer-Art/Bernard

The Committee noted that they are trying to remove the weeds early on so that they are easier to remove. No precautions need to be taken when weeding the dog strangling vine weed, as long as it has not started to seed yet.

13. Fire in the Park- Art/Bernard

The Committee discussed some small fires that have occurred in the meadow. The cause of the fires was unknown, but the fires were thought to be started by teenagers playing around or by people smoking. Consequently, the Committee inquired about putting no smoking signs up to prevent these fires. Staff were not sure if this would be permitted under the City's by-laws, but Nory Takata agreed to look into the matter.

14. Woodchips-addition of chips-Art

The Committee asked if the City has any extra woodchips and if yes, if they could be put in the meadow.

15. Erosion at the top of Leslie-Art

The Committee noted that there is very severe erosion at the entrance to the pathway to meadow on Leslie Avenue by the Bahai entrance. A member asked if a small swale could be added. A member asked to have the

concrete blocks in this area removed. Nory Takata will discuss the matter with David Plant and report back to the Committee.

16. Updates on Garbage Receptacles

Nory noted the open garbage cans will be replaced with domed garbage cans. The Committee noted that there is an issue with residents littering at the top of Leslie. Members were requesting an additional garbage can there as well as signage for no dumping/no littering. Staff noted that they have been reluctant to add waste receptacles, as sometimes the issue gets worse when a waste receptacle is added.

17. Japanese Knotwood-Update

Nory Takata advised that the City has a treatment plan for the Japanese Knotwood, but it will take multiple applications and years to get rid of it. Currently, there is only a small patch in the meadow.

18. Butterfly garden-Nory

Nory Takata advised will look into the City's plan for butterfly gardens this spring/summer.

19. Lake to Lake Cycling trail- tree removal, and 3-meter paved path, public notice-Gail

The Committee briefly discussed the Lake to Lake trail. The Committee expressed some concern with respect to the width of the path, noting signs may need to be installed cautioning cyclist to be aware of wildlife and that lane markings should be considered. The Committee also asked if a watch for snakes/reptile signs could be put up with the Lake to Lake project.

It was noted that these issues will be addressed as they apply to Markham parks.

An interactive map was provided from a member from a York Region site.

<http://york.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=c82d4cdec19a4354b4561bf4eb0827cd&webmap=3ae071432a7748e0a1070e008df86848>

20. Other business:

a. Northern Shrike

A brief description of a bird found in the meadow was provided.

b. Spring Clean Up

The Committee was in the process of promoting the spring clean-up.

c. Salmon

The Committee inquired if staff could put up no fishing signs by the river in the meadow. Staff will look into where fishing is permitted in Markham and into whether signs could be put up to this affect.

Don Macfarlane was asked to email the Committee the picture he took of a turtle in the meadow.

It was noted that a report on Markham's Wildlife Inventory is going to the City's General Committee on Monday.

Moved by Bernard Sze

Seconded by Gail Lavery

That the Committee ask Council to request staff to prepare a report on fishing and the various laws that apply in Markham (what is permitted and what is not).

Carried

d. Vacancy

Laura Gold advised that Don Macfarlane will be appointed to the Committee next week at Council.

21.

e. Next meeting

The next meeting of the German Mills Meadow & Natural Habitat Committee will be held on August 30, 2018 at 3:30 pm.

21. Adjournment

The German Mills Meadow & Natural Habitat Committee adjourned at 5:03 pm.