



MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES August 4, 2016

PRESENT

Members

Omar Bhatti
Councillor Valerie Burke
Ivan Cheung
Councillor Alex Chiu
Karen Lui
Noel Shippey

REGRETS

Shadi Aghaei
Bruce (Shichun) Chen
Sadiq Pirani
Catherine Jay, Urban Design
Councillor Logan Kanapathi

Staff

Tanya Lewinberg, Public Realm Coordinator
Christina Lee, Committee Coordinator

WELCOME and CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:40 pm with Karen Lui serving as Chair.

DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None was declared.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Item 2 of the agenda "Presentation from Public Art Coordinator" was postponed to the next meeting on the advice from Ms. Tanya Lewinberg, the Public Realm Coordinator, the Public Art Coordinator was unavailable to attend this evening.

Item 3 of the agenda "Presentation on Signage By-Law" was postponed to the next meeting due to the bylaw staff being unavailable to attend this evening.

1. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2016 AND JUNE 9, 2016

As there was no quorum, adoption of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

2. PUBLIC REALM PROJECT UPDATE – Tanya Lewinberg

- A. The Forest of Hope – Armenian 100 Tree Memorial - The opening of the Forest of Hope is set for September 28, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. There will be a ceremonial tree planting and the unveiling of an Armenian Memorial monument.
- B. Park Shelters/Shade Structures – The installations at Toogood Pond Park and Randall Park are nearing completion and will be opening shortly. Work on the installation at Milliken Mills Park will begin in fall 2016.
- C. Armada Community Centre – With grading and sodding completed, planting will begin on the inside area beginning on September 5, 2016
- D. Unionville Inspiration Board – the board is being monitored by volunteers to watch for vandalism.
- E. City Plantings and Susie Gardens Programs - There are 77 Adopt-a-Park program locations in Markham. The program encourages Markham residents, businesses, schools and community groups to become actively involved in maintaining their local green spaces through community tree plantings and litter clean-up.

The Susie Garden Program, the volunteer program sponsored by the City of Markham, the Markham Garden and Horticultural Society and the Thornhill Garden & Horticultural Society to recognize Markham residents for having gardens that beautify Markham.

Both these programs have been well received but Ms. Lewinberg will be working to update the programs to ensure there is continued interest.

Nory Takata, Parks Planner, Operations will be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the option of focusing on pollinator friendly gardens to align with Markham's Adopt a Park program. Nory Takata will also be consulted on Councillor Chiu's concern that the Highgate Park Adopt a Park group may be losing interest: and whether there is an opportunity to change the sponsor.

- F. Traffic Control Boxes Wrapping – Heritage areas will have special wraps but will require Heritage approval. Ms. Lewinberg is trying to encourage York Region to contribute to the project on Regional Roads.

Mr. Omar Bhatti joined the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

- G. Vendor Box Infrastructure – Ms. Lewinberg reported that the City is almost ready to issue permits. There will be consultation in due course.
- H. Installation of Bike Racks - Ms. Lewinberg advised that she's been working to identify those locations which need bike racks. Steeles Avenue could use installations but the locations are governed by the City of Toronto. She has been working on gauging the Toronto's interest. Ms. Lui asked whether York Region had been consulted regarding the placement of bike racks on regional roads.

Ms. Lewinberg advised that in some locations the East/West roads were City of Toronto while the North/South might be York Region. An example would be the corner of Bayview and Steeles where Toronto has jurisdiction over Steeles and York Region rules over Bayview. Should Toronto not be interested in bike racks on Steeles, then Ms. Lewinberg will approach York Region about placing the racks on Bayview.

3. PARKS RENAISSANCE PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Lewinberg informed the members that she was met with all Councillors to discuss the parks in their wards as to how to improve their parks. There were requests for

- A. the installation of adult fitness gear for all to access and incorporate a work out into a biking/walking/hiking trip through the parks or trails. Ms. Lewinberg indicated that more research would be needed to ensure that equipment could withstand the elements and be maintained at a minimal cost. She also advised that she had learned of a program offered by the Ontario Tire Stewardship which produces rubber surfacing. The program would pay for half of the cost of the surfacing material and provide a grant of \$5,000 per park towards the cost of installation.
- B. gardens planted with flora to attract pollinators
- C. accessible play equipment – perhaps one piece in each park
- D. benches with armrests to provide better accessibility; the armrests would allow people to use the armrests to push themselves up from the bench or ease themselves on to the bench
- E. Shade provision through sails, trellises and other installations. The newer parks often do not have sufficiently mature trees to provide vital shade for park users.

Ms. Lewinberg spoke of Mobi-Mat, a product that is portable and makes soft surfaces (grass, sand, gravel) supportive enough to allow wheelchairs, scooters and walkers to access areas such as the water's edge at a beach.

The members suggested that Markham's Accessibility Committee be consulted on many of these ideas.

Ms. Lewinberg encouraged the members to appeal for input and ideas on how existing parks can be made more appealing. She gave examples such as the installation of game boards and, for relief from Nature Deficiency Syndrome, the installation of benches within woodlots.

Councillor Burke emphasized that the Park Renaissance Strategy is to provide the opportunity for some light touches be added to quickly improve newer, barer parks and to quickly refurbish older parks.

4. PARKS RENAISSANCE PLAN UPDATE

- A. Annswell Park – Councillor Burke advised the members that a group would like to refurbish the park to acknowledge the history of the park. Under discussion is fencing and paving to match the historic flavour of the existing building; remove the overgrown cedars; refurbish the well. The building itself may need an engineering survey. At present the building is used by a Scouting group and a group for prayer. Councillor Burke has started on a plan that will need to go to the Heritage committees for review.
- B. Leitchcroft Commons – Ms. Lewinberg advised that consideration is being given to the addition of planting beds to either side of the steps to try to soften the steps.
- C. Location and Control of Information Boards - Ms. Lewinberg provided two examples of message boards that are available commercially. One option is single sided and open so that it is available to all to use. The other option is a double sided board that can include locking plexiglass panels. Pilot locations under consideration are Pamona Mills, Berczy Park and Wismer Park.

These sites are being considered as each has a dedicated volunteer group which may be enjoined to help monitor the boards for inappropriate, outdated materials and vandalism. Councillor Burke asked to be included in the discussions for the Pamona Mills location. It was suggested that the Adopt A Park group be consulted to see if they could endorse these and/or suggest other locations where there is a civic minded group which could assist with monitoring the boards.

Preference was indicated by the members for the double sided boards. It was suggested that the volunteer groups be consulted for their input. Perhaps one side could be closed and locked and one side to provide public access. Ms. Lui advised that her group has drafted a few examples of text that might be used to inform posters of the general posting rules. It was also suggested that the text used by the City of Markham, for those public notice boards in facilities, be checked for appropriate wording.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Speaker Series - The members briefly discussed the purpose of the Speaker Series which has been postponed to the fall. Members commented that the series, in its timing (lunch times) and location of presentations, seemed to be geared towards City staff and professionals rather than the average resident. This matter will be added to the agenda of the committee's next meeting

- B. Felix Park – Councillor Burke

Councillor Burke advised that this park was named for Felix Opatowski, a Holocaust survivor. She has been worked with a local resident and staff to help improve the park and a celebration will be scheduled for August 14, 2016.

- C. Canada Post Mailboxes – Councillors Burke and Chiu

The Councillors informed the members that the Mayor had written to the President and CEO of Canada Post after Council had passed a motion requesting Canada Post be asked to maintain their mailboxes. The Mayor did write and the Chair responded but nothing has been done. The Councillors asked if this committee could take any action.

It was suggested that the committee could pass its own motion requesting Council to write again to Canada Post to ask if the Corporation had developed an action plan regarding the mailboxes.

This matter will be added to the agenda of the committee's next meeting.

- D. Public Realm Presence on City of Markham's Website – Ms. Lewinberg advised that there is now a website presence with the refreshing of the Public Realm webpage. She also advised that there can be more content when the City has launched its new website.
- E. Councillor Burke asked if the members could consider what might be done about the number of cigarette butts that are littering the parks. This topic will be added to the Agenda of the next meeting.
- F. Councillor Chiu asked if the Clerk's office could advise of the status of some of members who have not been at these meetings. Without quorum, the members have not been able to advance items.

12. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE

The Committee is next scheduled to meet on

With no further business to discuss, the Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.