



MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES June 9, 2016

PRESENT

Members

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

REGRETS

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

Staff

Barb Rabicki, Director, Operations
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator

1. WELCOME and CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:42 pm with Karen Lui serving as Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None was declared.

3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

The agenda was accepted with the following addition:
Presentation by Citizen Members – Community Message Board

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2016

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

5. NEW PUBLIC REALM COORDINATOR

Barb Rabicki, Director, Operations, reported that Brett Lucyk has left the position and Tanya Rozenberg has been hired as Public Realm Coordinator starting June 21, 2016. It is felt that her dynamic energy and experience in public consultation will bring a fresh start to Public Realm initiatives.

6. PARKS RENAISSANCE STRATEGY

Barb Rabicki reported that the draft Parks Renaissance Strategy has been submitted to Markham Council. She distributed and reviewed information outlining the vision, goals, guiding principles and valuation criteria for the program. The Parks Renaissance Strategy will incorporate a review of Markham's parks and make recommendations for priorities. It will allow Markham to address the dichotomy of older parks by adding new amenities. It is expected that the strategy will reimagine parks and add "lite touches" to make them more beautiful, to encourage increased use of the parks by residents.

A Parks Renaissance Coordinator will be hired to connect with Markham Council, Committee Members, and residents to evaluate progress of the Parks Renaissance Strategy. It is expected that consultation will take place in July and August with priorities identified in the fall, so that some smaller projects may be completed in 2016 while others will be scheduled for completion in 2017.

7. UPDATE ON 2016 PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

Forest of Hope - Armenian 100 Tree Memorial

The Armenian community is working with Markham staff to finalize the design of the memorial for victims of the Armenian Genocide in 1915. The opening ceremony and tree planting will be scheduled for September 2016.

Park Shelters

Barb Rabicki reported that new park shelters will be installed at Randall Park and Toogood Pond Park in the summer and at Milliken Mills Park in fall 2016. Updates for John Daniels Park have been deferred to 2017 as it will be part of a larger and exciting renovation project.

Armada Community Centre

Barb Rabicki reported that regrading and sodding is progressing well.

Unionville Inspiration Board

Barb Rabicki reported that the board was installed in May 2016. Volunteers check it daily and Markham Parks staff remove disrespectful messages.

City Plantings

Barb Rabicki reported that tree plantings are scheduled for Princess Street, located on the east side of Milne Park. She will email Committee members a list of groups involved in the plantings. She also reported that 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 new Public Realm Coordinator will help refresh the program.

Susie Gardens

Barb Rabicki reported that the Susie Garden Program, a 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, has been well received but it may be time to refresh the program. It was suggested that Nory Takata, Parks Planner, 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. Councillor Chiu noted that Highgate Park Adopt a Park group appears to be losing interest: is there an opportunity to change the sponsor? Barb Rabicki will follow up with Nory Takata to get further information.

Traffic Control Boxes

Barb Rabicki reported that there has been very positive feedback about the wraps for the traffic control boxes. She will have the Public Realm co-ordinator follow up with York Region staff the possibility of installing the wraps on traffic control boxes located on Regional roads.

8. SIGNAGE BYLAW

Barb Rabicki advised that the By-laws department reported that the sign bylaw is under review since the number of electronic signs is growing. By-laws staff will be requested to provide a presentation to the group at the next meeting.

Councillor Alex Chiu left the meeting at 6:40 pm.

9. DISCUSSION OF THREE PROJECTS

Karen Lui reported that the citizen members of the Committee had met and identified projects to initiate and/or support:

- Community bulletin board in parks where people gather. Two types of boards were suggested: one that is open for people to contribute, and a locked one for posting messages;
- Improving communications with community, stakeholders, ratepayers and citizen groups; and
- Improving streetscaping.

Karen Lui and Ivan Cheung presented a proposal to locate open and locked Community Message Boards in Ray Street Park, South Unionville (Kennedy/Hwy 7) and Berczy Park, Berczy Village North (The Bridle Walk/Bur Oak). Reasons for selecting these parks include:

- A number of posters are affixed to the majority of Canada Post mailboxes in those the neighbourhoods;
- The parks are heavily utilized (high traffic/community node);
- The neighbourhoods have high populations of new immigrants, representing an opportunity for engagement and integration, and to develop a sense of community;
- The neighbourhoods have high populations of seniors who often communicate through word of mouth rather than electronically.

The SWOT analysis identified strengths such as inexpensive means of alternative communication with residents; weaknesses such as limited content control and needs for ongoing maintenance; opportunities such as diverting posters on Canada Post Mail Boxes and in turn enhancing the Public Realm; and threats such as visual pollution, offensive content and graffiti. Barb Rabicki congratulated Karen Lui and Ivan Cheung for the impressive initiative they presented. She suggested creating a list of possible parks – the proposal might be implemented in newer parks via budget funding for 2017, and in older parks via Parks Renaissance Strategy funding. Possible locations of Pomona Mills, Simonston & Toogood were also discussed. It was agreed that the new Public Realm Coordinator will reach out to Committee members to identify possible park locations and pilot of both an open and locked board. Criteria for selecting parks will include the number of people passing by, gateway/gathering points, and location. The new Public Realm Coordinator will investigate the types of message boards available.

Barb Rabicki distributed and reviewed the Public Realm page from the Markham website. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have someone who is not a Committee member review the copy to see if it is easily understood, to make copy engaging, and for consideration to be given to adding information about contacting the Contact Centre for complaint reporting and adding questions about where specifically in Markham there could be improvement.

The Message Board PowerPoint presentation will be forwarded for attachment to the minutes.

9. SPEAKER SERIES

Barb Rabicki reported that the new Public Realm Coordinator will contact Committee members for ideas for future speakers and topics.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None was reported.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be scheduled for August 4, 2016 at 5:30 pm

12. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Councillor Valerie Burke

Seconded by Noel Shippey

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

CARRIED