



MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES April 7, 2016

PRESENT

Members

Shadi Aghaei
Councillor Valerie Burke
Bruce (Shichun) Chen
Ivan Cheung
Councillor Alex Chiu
Karen Lui
Noel Shippey

Staff

Barb Rabicki, Director, Operations
Brett Lucyk, Public Realm Coordinator
Kitty Bavington, Council/Committee Coordinator

REGRETS

Omar Bhatti
Councillor Logan Kanapathi
Sadiq Pirani

1. WELCOME and CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:38 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 as distributed.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM PUBLIC REALM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON DECEMBER 3, 2015 AND MARCH 3, 2016

It was

Moved by: Councillor Alex Chiu
Seconded by: Councillor Valerie Burke

That the minutes of the Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee meetings held on December 3, 2015 and March 3, 2016, be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

5. 2016 PUBLIC REALM BUDGET AND PROJECTS

Brett Lucyk, Public Realm Coordinator, reviewed major Public Realm projects, and the strategy. He will distribute copies of the strategy to Committee members.

Traffic Control Boxes

Twenty new sites have been selected for traffic control box wraps in June or July, 2016. Six new heritage sites have been added, two in each of the Thornhill, Unionville, and Markham heritage districts.

Unionville Chalk Board

The board will be located in the park area near the grandstand, and will be installed in May. It will be monitored by students, who will photograph the board and upload the pictures to the website.

Berczy Square Commemorative Monument

The commemorative monument to William Berczy is in process. It is currently in storage, being prepared for installation and the opening of the park in the fall.

Community Plantings

New sites have been selected. The Community plantings will continue throughout the spring and summer.

Speaker Series

The Speaker Series has been renewed for 2016 after the great success in 2015. They are aiming for three or four events, and are working with Urban Design staff for appropriate topics.

Armenian 100 Tree Memorial

The tree memorial is underway, with the opening slated for May 28, 2016 in Ashton meadows Park.

Other 2016 Projects:

- Policy for commemorative/memorial spaces within Markham parks and open spaces
- Gateway and destination master plan
- Vendor box
- Park shelters
- Adopt-a-park program
- Parks renaissance strategy

6. STATUS UPDATE RE: BY-LAWS AND 2015/16 INITIATIVES

2016 Public Realm Strategy:

- Made in Markham innovation and design
- Keep Markham Beautiful
- Create gateways and destinations
- Animate our neighbourhoods and districts:
The committee indicated a concern with electronic signs. Staff will follow up with By-law staff on complaints and enforcement.
- Harmonize our efforts and share our resources:
It was suggested that this Committee meet with the Public Art Committee to coordinate efforts.

7. THREE PROJECTS

Karen Lui reported that the citizen members of the Committee met last week to identify projects. Suggested projects to initiate and/or support are:

- Community engagement and participation
- Seek community input on public realm ideas – provide a format for the public to submit ideas
- Education of the “Public Realm”. What is it and what does Markham offer? This could include social media outreach
- Reaching out to stakeholders, ratepayers and citizen groups
- Request a staff review of the Public Realm communication plan, i.e. publications for distribution to libraries and website. This is intended as an easy introduction and synopsis of the concept of the Public Realm. Another suggestion was to develop a short and informative video, similar to that used for Emerald Ash Borer that could be used to engage the public and encourage involvement.
- Implement a standardized process to submit ideas
- Community bulletin board in a park, where people gather. Two types of boards were suggested – one that is open for people to contribute, and a locked one for posting items. Ratepayers groups or BIAs could help maintain the boards.
- Improve streetscaping
- Place making – improving gateways to identify distinct communities
- More flowers and plantings. Although there are budget constraints, low maintenance plants could be provided, with residents assisting in maintenance

The Committee noted existing public art projects such as murals on railway bridges were well received.

Best practices in other jurisdictions were noted, such as Toronto having a lot of message boards. Ivan Cheung offered to do best practices research on how Toronto obtains and manages their boards. There are not only physical boards, (concerns about vandalism or disrespectful messages) but also a message board on the City’s website. In South Unionville, the residents are predominately older and Asian, so a website would not be as effective, but a bulletin board would be helpful to the community.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Councillor Alex Chiu is continuing work on a monument project for the future park in the Copper Creek Drive and Rizal Road area. The subject is Dr. Jose Rizal, a national hero, and it is being funded by non-City funds. He will report back with an update.

Barb Rabicki reported that Markham has been declared the first Canadian Monarch-friendly City. An education program is being initiated to promote planting milkweed to support the Monarch. Operations and Sustainability Departments will be working together to develop workshops and a public education program. Staff are also working on a bee strategy. These issues are important to sustainability.

The Committee discussed meeting frequency and productivity, and considered that the meeting format is not conducive to accomplishing objectives. It was agreed that a less formal tone and a smaller room would lend itself to more productive discussions. It was suggested that the Committee target a small number of specific goals, perhaps creating subcommittees, in order to focus their efforts, and that the members leave the meetings with tasks to accomplish for the next meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on June 9, 2016, at 5:30 p.m.

The Committee members will work on the message board project and report back. The best practices review will be reported at the next meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.