



MINUTES
MILLIKEN MILLS SUBCOMMITTEE
June 8, 2011, Canada Room

Milliken Mills Subcommittee

Mayor Frank Scarpitti
Regional Councillor Gord Landon
Councillor Alex Chiu
Councillor Logan Kanpathi

Members of Council

Councillor Don Hamilton

Staff

Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
Biju Karumanchery, Senior Development Manager
Richard Kendall, Manager, Central Region
Anna Henriques, Planner II
Kitty Bavington, Council/Committee Coordinator

Guests

Stephen D'Agostino, Thompson Rogers
John Armstrong, Rogers
Tina Kaichis
Cathy Barogianis, Somerset Academy
Sue Meyers, Somerset Academy
Vicky McKenzie, Somerset Academy
Farah Badar Hobin, Somerset Academy
Tatyana Moro Rogers
Giorgio Abbonati Rogers
Seema Siddiq
Sameer Siddiq
Mehnar Siddiq

The Milliken Mills Subcommittee meeting convened at 3:25 PM in the Canada Room with Councillor Alex Chiu in the Chair.

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST – None Disclosed

1. Telecommunications Towers
Rogers Tower, Ward 8, south of Brimley Road and 14th Avenue

Background:

On April 12, 2011, the Development Services Committee directed staff to continue to consult with Rogers regarding the tower under construction, and to hold a Milliken Mills Subcommittee meeting with Rogers, the affected Ward Councillors and staff.

The Ward 3 Councillor identified another tower being proposed in Ward 3 and requested an opportunity to provide comments.

The purpose of this meeting is not to seek changes to the existing tower at 14th Avenue and Brimley Road, but to discuss and understand the site selection process for this tower, and for cell towers in general. The Committee members would like to understand what is involved, from the proponents perspective, in identifying and selecting potential sites. The Development Services Committee may be considering amendments to the Policy for the Installation of Telecommunications Facilities in the near future.

Stephen D'Agostino of Thompson Rogers, made a presentation regarding wireless technology and the need for a robust wireless network. The existing network in Markham was illustrated. It was noted that the federal government (Industry Canada) has exclusive jurisdiction over radio communications and telecommunications and that consultation with land use authorities (local municipality) is not required for new antenna systems less than 15m, or additions to existing systems. Building Approvals are no longer accepted as evidence of land use authority concurrence.

The objectives for the installation at Brimley Road and Lee Avenue, and the site selection were discussed. He explained the cone of service and gaps in service, with respect to the weakest links dropping calls and the impacts of data connections versus voice calls. An alternate location at a nearby plaza had been considered, but the site was not available. In this site selection, no red flags had been indicated and the selection was made as per the normal process.

Safety Code 6 and RF Exposure guidelines, as determined by Health Canada, were described. This tower will operate at 3% of the Safety Code 6 maximum.

The location was identified in relation to the adjacent school and daycare uses. The Committee suggested the Town may be able to assist in obtaining more suitable locations in the future. Opportunities to blend into the community structures were discussed.

In response to questions, Mr. D'Agostino advised that:

- the towers are securely installed as per rigorous CSA regulations, with no danger of falling over
- a suggested location beneath the hydro tower is not appropriate nor available
- a tower height of 30m is preferred, but Rogers can make do with a smaller one
- consultation exceeded Industry Canada protocols, by meeting the Town's requirements and obtaining a letter of concurrence
- energy generated by the tower is comparable to a Wi-Fi system

Regional Councillor Gord Landon offered to contact the owner of the plaza site on behalf of Rogers, with respect to locating a tower in the more suitable location. Another option may be to use a town road allowance. Mr. D'Agostino advised that the tower has already been constructed and is ready to begin operating. He could not comment on whether the tower can be relocated, but will communicate the question to the proponent.

The Committee questioned the danger levels of the tower transmissions, suggesting that there are other towers located close to schools, and that similar health issues arise from children using cell phones. Evidence of the danger has not been provided. It was noted that the Town is reviewing changes to the guidelines regarding the approval process.

Cathy Barogianis, 77 Brimley Road, Principal of Somerset Academy, advised that the tower is 25 metres from the school building, and expressed concern for possible health hazards, as well as impacts to school's enrolment and financial status. Ms. Barogianis advised that other towns have increased the separation distance requirements, and asked that any revisions to the guidelines be retroactive to include the subject tower.

Ms. Barogianis was requested to provide information on the other towns that have amended the separation distances. Mr. D'Agostino offered to provide protocols for GTA municipalities.

Sue Meyers, a teacher at Somerset Academy stated her opinion that the towers should not be located near children, and suggested that unforeseen illnesses may develop years from now. Ms. Meyers stated that the reduced enrolment could impact employment and even the existence of the school.

The Committee suggested that educating the parents may be a solution to the enrolment issues. It was stated that Rogers has acted legally and cannot be forced to move the existing tower; however, the Town will work with Rogers to try to find a solution.

Mr. D'Agostino summarized that Health Canada looked at this health issue last year and held hearings, and has determined that there is no need to make changes to the guidelines.

The Ward 7 Councillor stated that he has concerns about the situation and supported the recommendation by Regional Councillor Gord Landon regarding the plaza location.

The Committee thanked the residents for attending, and thanked Rogers for their cooperation. Staff were requested to research other towers that had been located near schools, and to review the recent statement by the World Health Organization regarding cell phones, and whether it involves towers or just phones.

Mr. D'Agostino advised that once a response is received from Councillor Landon's initiative, Rogers should be able to respond within a week regarding the possibility of pursuing alternate opportunities.

Moved by: Councillor Don Hamilton
Seconded by: Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That Regional Councillor Gord Landon be requested to pursue his offer to contact the owner of the plaza with respect to an alternate location for the Rogers tower; and

That subsequent to a favourable response by the plaza owner, Rogers be requested to consider relocating the current cell tower to the plaza, if possible.

CARRIED

The Milliken Mills Sub-committee adjourned at 4:45 PM.