

Public Realm Advisory Committee
May 22, 2013
Engineering Board Room

Attendance:

<u>Members:</u> Councillor Valerie Burke Councillor Logan Kanapathi Hanif Nori, Chair Omar Bhatti Sadiq Pirani (by tele-conference) <u>Regrets:</u> Councillor Alex Chiu	<u>Staff:</u> Karen Boniface, Technical Coordinator Paul Ingham, Director, Operations Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning Catherine Jay, Manager, Urban Design Biju Karumanchery, Senior Development Manager Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services Rino Mostacci, Director of Planning and Urban Design Francine Périnet, Director of the Art Gallery Rachel Prudhomme, Manager of Special Projects Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator Vanessa Goldgrub, Public Realm Summer Student Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
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The Public Realm Advisory Committee convened at 3:40 p.m. with Hanif Nori presiding as Chair.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

A. Staff Public Realm Working Group

The Staff Public Realm Working Group and the Public Realm Advisory Committee introduced themselves.

B. Consultants Hired to Develop Public Realm Strategy, Policies and Manual

Peter Smith and Allison Harrington, Consultant, Peter J. Smith & Company Inc. introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Moved by Omar Bhatti

Seconded by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That the Minutes from the March 26, 2013 Public Realm Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was no business arising from the previous meeting.

4. OUTLINE OF THE WORK PLAN FOR THE PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY, POLICIES AND MANUAL

Peter Smith and Allison Harrington provided a brief presentation on their work plan for developing a public realm strategy, policies and manual for Markham.

The Committee answered four questions, as part of a visioning session. The following responses were provided:

1. A) What is your vision for the public realm?

- Relevant to the community;
- Provides a positive memorable experience;
- Consistent across the city;
- Authentic to Markham;
- Representative of Markham's heritage communities;
- Sustainable (including its amenities);
- Walkable (cycling and pedestrian friendly);
- Beautiful and visually aesthetic;
- Enhancing natural and existing beauty;
- Includes simple and subtle details;
- Leaves a legacy;
- Family oriented;
- Clean and well maintained public lands;
- Attractive buildings and landscaping;
- Random acts of beauty everywhere;
- Easily changeable when demographics change;
- Creates a wow factor for both residents and visitors to Markham;
- Includes public art;
- Improves the sidewalk network in Markham;
- Addresses the nature deficit in Markham;
- Creates a place people will discuss;
- Includes parks, open and green spaces;
- Reflective of Markham's neighbourhoods;
- Communicative;
- Educational;
- Provides the setting for multiple activities (e.g. business, recreation and education)
- Includes transit facilities;
- Uses outdoor spaces and areas effectively.

1. B) How does your vision of the public realm integrate into the community?

- Developed and transformed in partnership with the community;
- Creates a place where people can gather;
- Creates a place that is enjoyable by people of all ages and abilities;
- Creates harmony within the community;
- Revitalizes older communities in Markham;
- Brings communities/spaces together;
- Links pathways and trails;
- Includes making simple and subtle visual improvements to existing areas when opportunities arise (e.g. adding a pattern to the concrete side rail when rehabilitating a bridge);
- Involves getting residents to take pride and ownership of the public realm;
- Includes visual and physical connection between open spaces and with buildings.

1. C) How will a Public Realm Plan help reach your vision for the future of the public realm?

- Includes smart, simple and measurable objectives toward improving the public realm;
- Provides Markham with a path to becoming a leader in improving the public realm;
- Commits enough resources to sustain and maintain the public realm;
- Recognizes Markham's history;
- Includes both large and small scale initiatives;
- Integrates with Markham's existing plans (e.g. Integrated Leisure Plan and Green Print);
- Integrates with Markham's social and economical framework;
- Helps access the quality of Markham's public spaces and landmarks;
- Proposes a series of coordinated initiatives for physical and functional improvement to the public realm that will benefit Markham residents and businesses.

2. A) How should the public realm be managed?

- Through dedicating an office and staff to improving the public realm;
- Through the development of clear structures and guidelines;
- Through continuous community outreach;
- Through the use of social media and online surveys;
- Through public private partnerships.

2. B) Who should be involved in the public realm development?

- A Committee of Council comprised of key stakeholders (e.g. business representatives, residents, York Region Staff and City of Markham Staff);
- Mayor and Members of Council;
- Senior management;

- All commissions;
- Varies levels of staff;
- The Community;
- Developers prior to subdivisions being assumed;
- The private sector;
- Schools;
- Artists;
- Cultural Communities;
- Community Leaders;
- Multiple stakeholders;
- Other Public Agencies (YRT, Hospitals and Public Utility Organizations).

3. What are the major issues facing public realm development?

- Lack of human resources;
- Lack of long term commitment to projects;
- Lack of resources to maintain the public realm;
- Making the public realm a priority for other public agencies and for residents;
- Recognizing when there is an opportunity to improve the public realm when doing standard work (e.g. road rehabilitation);
- Understanding the multiple layers that make up the public realm;
- Transforming from a suburban community to an urban community while maintaining or improving the public realm;
- Improving the public realm of already developed areas;
- Constructing parks in new subdivisions in a timely manner;
- Managing differences in opinions regarding what is beautiful;
- Deciding what to do with existing open spaces;
- Ensuring improvements to the public realm are long lasting to avoid public criticism;
- Getting all stakeholders to make improvements to the public realm a priority.

4. Are there any other issues or initiatives that we should be aware of as we develop the Public Realm Strategy?

- Ensures all Markham policies and plans are incorporated into the strategy.

5. PUBLIC ART UPDATE

Francine Périnet, Director, Varley Art Gallery provided a public art update. The public art being proposed for the Cornell Community Centre will be presented to the Public Art Advisory Committee by the artist this week. Submissions for public art proposals for the South East Markham Community Centre are currently being accepted. A purchasing project is scheduled this spring for Markham artists, the

successful artworks will be added to Markham's Circulation Inventory and displayed within Markham facilities. The Public Art Coordinator is currently working on a three year Public Art Plan for Markham in addition to coordinating Public Art Projects.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A day long work session on the Public Realm will be held on June 4, 2013.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Public Realm Advisory Committee is to be determined.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

Seconded by Omar Bhatti

That the Public Realm Advisory Committee adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

CARRIED