

**Public Realm Advisory Committee**  
**June 6, 2012**  
**Ontario Room**

Attendance:

<u>Members:</u> Councillor Valerie Burke Councillor Alex Chiu Councillor Logan Kanapathi Hanif Nori, Chair Omar Bhatti Sadiq Pirani	<u>Staff:</u> Karen Boniface, Technical Coordinator Catherine Jay, Manager of Urban Design Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fires Services Francine Périnet, Director of the Art Gallery
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The Public Realm Advisory Committee convened at 5:12 p.m. with Karen Boniface presiding as Chair.

**1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR**

Moved by Councillor Logan Kanapathi  
Seconded by Sadiq Pirani

That Hanif Nori be appointed to the position of Chair of the Public Realm Advisory Committee.

CARRIED.

Hanif Nori assumed the role of Chair at 5:15 p.m.

Move Sadiq Pirani  
Seconded by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That Councillor Alex Chui be appointed to the position of Vice-Chair of the Public Realm Advisory Committee.

CARRIED.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Logan Kanapathi  
Seconded by Councillor Alex Chiu

That the Minutes of the Public Realm Advisory Committee meeting held on February 29, 2012 be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

Moved by Sadiq Pirani

Seconded by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That the Minutes of the Joint Public Art /Public Realm Advisory Committee meeting held on March 7, 2012 be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

### **3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

It was noted that the celebration of the Pomona Tennis Club Mural was a great success.

### **4. PUBLIC REALM UPDATE**

An update was provided on the following public art projects:

- A bake oven at Markham Museum;
- The bike rack to be placed at gateways to Markham (note: this item was discussed in more detail later in the meeting);
- A landscaping project at Civic Centre, which included naturalizing the area surrounding the pond and making the flower beds more sustainable and attractive year around;
- A mural to be painted on the bridge underpass at Henderson & Proctor.

#### Review of Public Realm Strategy

The Committee reviewed the Markham Public Art Strategy. The draft document was circulated to the Committee. The document provides guidelines on how Markham will engage, sustain and beautify the public realm. One of the areas that may be looked at under this strategy is managing the entrances to subdivisions as they age. The target date to complete this document was the end of the year. This Committee will be asked to provide feedback on the strategy and staff will provide an update on the consultation process. It was noted that the timing indicated in the document should be reviewed.

Staff explained that there is \$30,000 that can be granted to community projects to improve the public realm. The process used to grant these funds is still to be determined. The grant approval process may resemble that of the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund (MESF) or that of the Trees for Tomorrow program, but the funds should not be granted to projects that overlap with these programs. It was explained that the \$30,000 will help create a sense of appreciation for public realm projects. More funds can then be requested, as the community recognizes the benefits derived from these types of projects.

The Committee discussed how and when the funds could be granted, the scope of the projects and whether the funds should be matched. It was advised that the most successful projects involve the community coming together.

### Public Realm Projects

The following public realm improvement projects were discussed:

- A Mural located on Sheppard Avenue that beautified an unattractive bridge underpass;
- The creation of a vegetable garden;
- A ravine clean up;
- The placing of benches in key locations;
- The creation of a butterfly garden;
- The placing of Canadian flags on the flower post along Yonge Street in the Thornhill Heritage District;

The following ideas for public realm projects were discussed:

- Beautifying dedicated transit areas (note: this committee could make recommendations to York Region regarding this matter);
- Placing public art at the gateways to Markham.

### Sponsorship of Public Realm Projects

The possible sponsorship of public realm projects was discussed. It was noted that it helps create a sense of ownership when funds are allocated towards a project either through sponsorship or other means. Ideally sponsors could choose the project they would like to sponsor from a list of approved public realm projects.

The Committee noted the importance of having the public realm guidelines/policies in place. This will help this Committee move forward.

### Public Realm Speaker Series

Karen Boniface reported that there is \$6,000 designated for a public realm speaker series and that she would like the Public Realm Advisory Committee to assist with this. Sadiq Pirani advised that the York Region Engineers Association would be willing to speak about the public realm, as part of the speaker series. It was recommended that the general public be invited to attend the speaker series.

### General Discussion on the Public Realm

The Committee recommended that a sign be erected at public realm improvement sites. The sign should say “this is a demonstration project of the Public Realm Program”. The sign should also include contact information for those who would like to get involved. Karen Boniface was requested to follow up with Paul Ingham regarding this matter.

It was noted that the Pomona Mill Tennis Club mural is currently on Markham's website. Karen Boniface will work on placing information on the public realm on the website.

#### Boulevard Maintenance

It was noted that Markham recently passed a by-law that enforces the maintenance of boulevards, as boulevards were being neglected in some neighbourhoods. The by-law has been named "Keeping Markham Beautiful (Maintenance) By-law".

#### Newspaper Vending Boxes

There was a discussion on newspaper vending boxes in Markham. These vending boxes are not being maintained and affect the public realm. Staff advised that Markham has the ability to regulate these vendor boxes. The current policy is very old and outdated. It requires vendors to pay \$25 per year to place the vendor box on Town property. The vendor boxes are permitted in various locations across Markham.

Staff will survey other municipalities to see how they are managing this issue. The policy will then be revised to limit the locations where the vendor boxes can be located and to increase the price per year to have vendor boxes on Town property. Consideration is also being given to designing vendor boxes that organizations can rent rather than allowing vendor boxes to be placed on Town property.

#### Eco-Media Bins

A member noted that some of the eco-media bins are unattractive. Staff advised that some of these bins could be reserved for Markham advertisements to improve the public realm.

#### Bicycle Rack Design

The Committee reviewed the proposed bike rack designs to be placed at gateways to Markham. There was a request to see more designs and it was suggested that the bike rack be designed to hold multiple bicycles. It was noted that this Committee can select multiple designs for the bike rack and that the Cycling & Pedestrian Advisory Committee should be asked to provide feedback on the design of the rack.

#### Public Art Policy

Francine Périnet, Director of the Art Gallery, spoke about the new Public Art Policies approved by Council on May 12, 2012: (1) Public Art Policy-Private Sector; and (2) Public Art Projects-Markham Municipal Projects.

The policy for the private sector encourages a contribution of up to one percent of new residential and non-residential construction projects for public art. Whereas, the policy for municipal projects allocate up to one percent of construction cost of new municipal construction budgets and municipal renovation projects over one million dollars for the purpose of public art. The next steps include establishing a 3 year plan and evaluating the policies in 3 years time.

It was noted that Markham Council approved the city status for Markham.

Condition of Canada Post Mailboxes in Markham

Moved Councillor Valerie Burke

Seconded by Councillor Logan Kanapathi

That the City of Markham request that Canada Post maintain its postal boxes in Markham.

CARRIED.

Signs for Markham Communities

Councillor Valerie Burke will discuss with Brenda Librecz the possibility of having signs for the different communities within Markham.

**5. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Public Realm Advisory Committee will be held in September. The Committee Clerk will survey the Committee to determine the date.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The Markham Public Realm Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:00 p.m.