



**THIRD MEETING OF THE
2012 BUDGET COMMUNITY CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MARKHAM CIVIC CENTRE
October 13, 2011**

MINUTES

Attendance:

Councillors Present: Regional Councillor Joe Li Regional Councillor Jim Jones Councillor Don Hamilton Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Logan Kanapathi Councillor Howard Shore	Staff Present: Gary Adamkowski, Director of Asset Management Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services Karen Liu, Senior Financial Analyst Joel Lustig, Treasurer Peter Loukes, Director of Operations John Ryerson, Director of Culture Andrea Tang, Manager of Financial Planning Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer Mathew Vetere, Financial Analyst Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
--	---

The 2012 Budget Sub-Committee Community Consultation meeting convened at 7:10 p.m. with Councillor Logan Kanapathi presiding as Chair.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Alan Ho and Councillor Don Hamilton welcomed residents to the 2012 Budget Community Consultation Meeting.

The Chair provided opening remarks and highlighted the projects completed in 2011.

2. 2012 BUDGET COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETING

Ms. Andrea Tang, Manager of Financial Planning, presented the preliminary 2012 Budget to residents. The presentation included a review of the 2012 budget process; the economic trends and fiscal scan; a review of the preliminary 2012 capital budget; a review of the preliminary 2012 operating budget; an overview of assessment & property taxes; future budget challenges and the 2012 budget highlights.

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

There was a question regarding whether the Town is investing in its cycling infrastructure. In particular, bicycle racks and separate bicycle lanes on roads with speed limits exceeding 40 km an hour. It was noted that the Town needs to make cycling more attractive to residents.

Staff advised that the Town is investing heavily in transportation. One of the improvements mentioned was that a bridge is being built over the 404 to help relief congestion on hwy 7. It was explained that many major roads are Regional roads, advising Markham is encouraging the Region to build segregated bike lanes on major roads. The Region has not confirmed its commitment to building bike lanes on major roads at this time. The Town acknowledges cycling improvements are needed going forward.

A resident expressed concern regarding Markham's increase in expenditure due to wage settlement agreements. It was felt that wages should be frozen given the current economic state and that Markham should re-consider having labour unions. It was also recommended that the Town review its processes and look for improvements/efficiencies.

Staff advised Markham has always been prudent in regards to its staffing. Markham outsources many of its services (e.g. winter maintenance) and Markham is a lean organization. Additionally, it funds development related positions through development application fees. Markham also has an Excellence through Efficiencies and Effectiveness Committee that continuously reviews processes and makes improvements to processes.

It was reported that the budget is currently under review and is subject to change.

A resident questioned the replacement cost budgeted per ash tree. It was noted that this is just an estimate and that the Town will go to tender to ensure it is obtaining the greatest value for tax dollars. Also, consider treating the tree versus removing the tree entirely dependent on the state of the tree.

A resident questioned the benefit of building facilities for the PAN AM Games. Staff explained these facilities are being built to benefit the community for years to come.

An inquiry was made regarding the average retirement age over the past 10 years. It was noted there is no mandatory retirement age under the Province of Ontario. There was also a question regarding whether staff salaries over a certain level are published. It was confirmed that salaries over \$100K are published.

It was noted that Markham faces an uncertain economic future and that financial prudence should be practiced, noting there are many Markham residents facing financial constraints at this time. It was suggested that vacancies be reviewed to see if the positions are still required. Staff

reported that information on the average retirement age for a Town employee, overtime pay and the pay scale for Town employees can be provided.

A resident asked about Markham's animal care strategy. It was noted that Markham is hiring a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to provide it with options for providing animal care services in Markham. The feasibility study will consider all options for animal care & wildlife services. It was noted that the OSPCA is currently contracted to provide Markham's animal care services.

A resident noted that taxes should be raised when there are growth related pressures creating a legitimate need to raise tax dollars.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The Budget Community Consultation meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.