

Good morning. I am Robert Mok and as the president of Downtown Markham Ratepayers Association I am speaking on behalf of our association, its executives and all of its members.

First of all, let me advise the Committee that the agenda item refers to a non-existent report dated Oct 19. The only valid report is dated today Nov 2 and it is also erroneously referring to itself as the Oct 19 report in paragraph#1. Maybe we need to take more care and exercise more professionalism on these formal documents?

Coincidentally, the developer started their sales effort on Condominiums under this rezoning parcel of land before Oct 19. While the City may consider this activity as something private between the developer and the purchasers and a risk taking venture by both prior to the approval of the rezoning application, many of our members thought otherwise after they connected the dots. They questioned if the developer knew something that they didn't. They wondered if there was a "De Facto" approval and a foregone conclusion and it is just a technicality and a matter of time for this Council to put their approval stamp on this rezoning and a site plan application that has yet to be seen.

Our association is opposed to this rezoning amendment application and we have collected over 70 signatories to our petition to support that statement. When we asked residents within our boundaries to comment on this matter, we do not find a single person who would support this rezoning. Our residents provided a number of concerns and issues to us – traffic congestions, loss of employment opportunities, and a lack of confidence in the developer's effort to complete the Downtown Market project in accordance with the purchasers' expectations at the time of sales.

In reviewing the Staff Report, one cannot help but feel that justifications are provided “for” the developer from its perspective. It is as if the developer is writing the report and not the staff.

Under the Executive Summary, the figure of 545 condominium units was stated. There is no mention of the additional 5 or 6 live-work units which can be deduced from the paragraph dealing with the Parking requirements. Are we correct or is this just our imagination?

Page#5 on the report referred to unfinished Zoning by-law, required site specific exceptions and holding provisions to be presented to Council approval once finalized. Should these not be approved by the Development Services Committee first before they go to Council?

At both the Public meeting held on June 16 and the Community Information Meeting held on Oct 8, Clegg Road and its extension were deemed an urgent matter and one of the prominent areas of discussions. The connection of Clegg Road East of Warden Ave is paramount if we are to alleviate the traffic congestion now and into the future. There is no entrance into Markham Downtown area between Highway#7 and Enterprise Blvd at present. The City should take an initiative to get this short extension done up and not wait for developments 5 years or more down the road.

Page#6 regarding Employment uses within the balance of Centre West Precinct – A planning justification report was apparently submitted to staff. However, no statistics are provided now to justify that the employment uses, originally contemplated for the subject lands, can be successfully accommodated within the balance of the plan area.

Urban Design Staff Comments – It can be seen that this is a work in progress. There will be the introduction of additional design elements, landscaping, and amenity elements yet to be approved on the future site plan. On this basis, once the rezoning is approved, the site plan will just be a formality.

Page#7 Traffic Impact Study – it was stated that the proposed development is expected to generate 162 trips during the AM peak hour and 141 trips during the PM peak hour. With 545 units of apartment, this is definitely correct if they were retirement homes! Statistics must be tempered with logic. We find that occupants from more than half of Downtown Markham condominium units nearby left their homes every day in their cars during AM peak hours. Does that not make more common sense to you?

Page#8 – Parking

The proposed 634 parking spaces do not meet Markham Centre Zoning By-law 2004-196. The original Traffic study and TDM Plan identified the deficiency of 6 parking spaces to be accommodated by shared visitor and retail parking. This is now increased to 26 parking spaces due to the increased number of apartments. The justification submitted was based on proxy site parking surveys of adjacent residential buildings in April 2012 when the units were not fully occupied. That survey is outdated, and **invalid** to me, speaking as a statistician.

One of the things that residents have on their minds is the thought that the developer may ask for more rezoning amendments and start to deviate more from their original planning concepts on Downtown Markham that was sold to the purchasers. People bought into the original plan of the Gallery and Piazza within walking district of their apartments. Now, there are indications that some or all of these key features will be moved, diminished, or cancelled.

Residents do not want Downtown Markham to become “Cathedraltown II”. The City must exercise their monitoring duties and provide assurances to residents that prominent features submitted and advertised to attract first time buyers are not taken away at will without public consultations. Yes, times have change and deviations are sometime necessary. However, Integrity and accountability have to withstand the test of time.

I strongly urge all of you to look at this rezoning application with more attention and less haste. Do not approve it until you have all the facts and study them yourself like I did.

Please have the Development Services staff reply in writing to our questions above.

Thank you.

Robert Mok,
President, Downtown Markham Ratepayers Association (DMRA)

admin@DMRA.ca