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THE TALE OF TWO TOWNS

Ward system decisions

By Amy Lazar

As one municipality in **York Region** decides against polling its residents about the need for a ward system, another deems it necessary to make the right decision.

Town of Aurora council voted against putting a question on the October municipal election ballot that would have asked residents if they want a ward system implemented in the town.

Just a hop, skip and a jump north in the **Town of East Gwillimbury**, instead of making a decision based on a petition with 160 signatures, council opted to put it to their electors in October.

Last month, East Gwillimbury council agreed to move forward with an electoral system review this year for possible implementation in 2014 but have now reconsidered. Instead, council decided to cast a wider net and move forward with a study if the results demand it.

Council considered the question: “do you support the current electoral system of electing four councillors at large in East Gwillimbury?” at its April 6 meeting and held a public meeting on April 19 to pass a by-law to submit the question to the electors in October. The question must now be approved by the province.

If 50 per cent of eligible voters answer “no” the newly-elected council has 180 days to begin a review of the existing electoral system. Staff estimates the cost of the review at \$10,000 to \$20,000.

In Aurora, it has been a long road but at the special general committee meeting on April 20, council voted to receive a staff report with feedback from only 12 resident who attended two previous meetings, for information.

Committee also voted to “not proceed at this time to put a question on the ballot” and council will make the final decision at its Tuesday night meeting. (See *NRU-GTA Editions February 17, March 10 and April 21, 2010.*)

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JUST A HOP, SKIP AND A JUMP NORTH IN THE TOWN OF EAST GWILLIMBURY, INSTEAD OF MAKING A DECISION BASED ON A PETITION WITH 160 SIGNATURES, COUNCIL OPTED TO PUT IT TO THEIR ELECTORS IN OCTOBER.

NEW VAUGHAN OP

Major revamp

By Mark Ostler

The **City of Vaughan** has released the first volume of its new official plan for public review ahead of a public open house next week and a statutory public meeting later in May.

The document revamps the city’s planning policies, providing a comprehensive plan that for the first time covers the entire city. Vaughan’s current official plan consists of more than 700 amendments approved gradually for various parts of the city over 50 years.

The first volume provides city-wide planning policies and following the statutory meetings a final draft is expected to be approved by council before it breaks for the election this fall. Vaughan senior policy planner **Paul Robinson** told *NRU* that the city will finally have “a plan for all of Vaughan,” which will “reflect the vision for the next 20 years of development.”

In an interview last year, Robinson said the new document is “long overdue.”

“There isn’t actually a single document that’s reflective of how the city plans and develops now,” Robinson told *NRU* in March 2009. “It’s long overdue that we actually have the chance to define the new direction for the city. It’s time we had a new, contemporary policy framework.”

While the new plan, developed by city staff and planners at **Urban Strategies**, has been developed to conform

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Coming Up

APRIL 28

Mississauga Council, 9:00 a.m.

Brampton Council, 1:00 p.m.

MAY 3

Ajax Community Affairs & Planning Committee, 7:00 p.m.

Oakville Council, 7:00 p.m.

Mississauga Planning & Development Committee, 1:30 p.m.

Pickering Planning & Development Committee, 7:30 p.m.

Brampton Planning, Design & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.

MAY 4

Vaughan Council, 1:00 p.m.

MAY 5

York Region Planning & Economic Development Committee, 1:00 p.m.

Halton Region Planning & Public Works Committee, 9:30 a.m.

MAY 6

Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable, Victoria Park Pavilion, Kitchener, 8:30 am – 3:00 p.m. For more information or to RSVP contact Steven Bell at (905) 615-3200 ext 5725.

MAY 10

Whitby Council, 7:00 p.m.

Ajax Council, 7:00 p.m.

Oakville Planning & Development Council, 7:00 p.m.

Milton Administration & Planning Committee, 7:30 p.m.

MAY 12

Durham Region Council, 10:00 a.m.

Halton Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

Mississauga Council, 9:00 a.m.

Brampton Council, 1:00 p.m.

MAY 13

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2010 Central Ontario Municipal Symposium—Economic Innovation: Global to Local, Paramount Conference and Event Venue, 222 Rowntree Dairy Road, Vaughan. More info at www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page78.aspx.

BURLINGTON BUSINESS

Mapping a new vision

Funding has flowed down the federal pipeline to help the **Burlington Economic Development Corporation** map new homes for the city's evolving manufacturing sector.

The corporation has received \$300,000 through the **Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario** (FedDev Ontario) to hire a consulting team to create design specifications for a range of advanced manufacturing facilities.

The city's existing inventory of industrial space will also be assessed against the potential models and opportunities for future development will be identified.

"Burlington's future economic prosperity depends on a healthy, vital and globally competitive manufacturing base," said Mayor **Cam Jackson**.

"We will work with our leading manufacturers to ensure that we have the supportive environment and infrastructure to create more long-term quality jobs."

The manufacturing sector generates \$2.3 billion, which is about 55 per cent of the city's industry revenues and employs about 15,000 workers. However, in the last year, more than 400 jobs were lost due to plant closures and operational consolidations.

According to the city's economic development corporation, the sector reports that the quality of manufacturing space and building stock available is a major impediment to the

growth and incubation of advanced manufacturing. The city has about 18-million square feet of industrial space and an 8 per cent vacancy rate, which may be skewed by the fact that some of the space is used for non-industrial purposes.

The study will primarily look at space needs for small- and medium-sized enterprises that are expanding and looking to build facilities. It will look at what is needed from the industry's perspective, while outlining design parameters for energy efficiency, waste reduction, green technology and more.

BURLINGTON'S FUTURE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON A HEALTHY, VITAL AND GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE MANUFACTURING BASE.

• Cam Jackson



The final report will include a building stock inventory for the city and a feasibility report with estimated costs to retrofit the buildings to the new design standards. The design standards will be shared with neighbouring municipalities and the inventory information will be made available to developers and manufacturers.

The project is expected to be completed by March 2011, with a request for proposals for a project consultant to be released in the coming weeks. **NRU**

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Vaughan revamp continued from page 1

to provincial policies such as the growth plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine plan and the greenbelt plan, it also addresses a number of issues, including overlapping policies and incongruous definitions.

“They have hundreds of different land use designations, some of which are called the same thing, but in different parts of the city mean different things,” said **Pino Di Mascio**, Urban Strategies’ lead planner on this project. “What’s low-rise or low-density in one area is medium-density in another area.”

Di Mascio noted that the plan reflects a new direction in Vaughan’s growth and signals a significant shift towards intensification, partly thanks to the Spadina Subway extension, which he says provides “a real opportunity to become a lot more urban.”

“[Vaughan has] lots of opportunities within its built area to provide low-, medium- and high-rise housing,” Di Mascio told *NRU*. “[The city] should be able to manage the shift to intensification with a reasonable range of housing unit types.”

The plan includes expansion of the city’s urban boundary in two areas. The new official plan adds employment lands on either side of Highway 400, running between Jane Street and Weston Road and between Teston Road and Vaughan’s boundary with King Township. Also added to the urban area are two blocks along the north side of Teston Road dedicated for residential uses, between Jane and Keele streets and between Weston Road and Pine Valley Drive.

In total, the city’s urban boundary will be expanded by 3 per cent, with at least 45 per cent of new development coming in the form of intensification. The plan preserves natural heritage areas while promoting the development of more complete, compact communities. In addition, the plan introduces a design review process for major projects to ensure quality building and streetscape design.

Robinson noted that the plan is the result of extensive public consultation and reflects both the city’s and the public’s

vision for Vaughan’s future. The consultation process for the new official plan won a 2009 **Ontario Professional Planners Institute** Award of Excellence for public engagement and communications. The process included over 100 public events since the city began the project in 2007.

THEY HAVE HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT LAND USE DESIGNATIONS, SOME OF WHICH ARE CALLED THE SAME THING, BUT IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CITY MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS. WHAT’S LOW-RISE OR LOW-DENSITY IN ONE AREA IS MEDIUM-DENSITY IN ANOTHER AREA.

• **Pino Di Mascio**

The second volume of the new official plan includes site-specific policies and five secondary plans that the city is currently developing. Urban Strategies is consulting on two of these secondary plans, for the West Vaughan Employment Area and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, which will become the city’s downtown. These plans are expected to be released for public consultation in June and the city hopes to approve them before the election break as well. (See *NRU-GTA Edition, March 10, 2010*.)

The city will host a statutory public open house on volume one of the new OP May 3. A subsequent statutory public meeting will take place May 17. Both meetings will take place in council chambers from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. **NRU**



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RUNNING TAB ON THE RACE | ELECTION 2010

HALTON REGION

Town of Oakville incumbent mayor **Rob Burton** has been reg-

istered to run for re-election since the nominations opened in January. Burton is finishing up his first

term after being elected in 2006. More recently, another candidate has entered the race to challenge him.

John Kay, who originally registered to run as Ward 3 town and regional councillor but withdrew his nomina-

tion, has now thrown his hat into the mayoral ring. Kay is a former town by-law enforcement officer.

Note: Every week leading up to the October municipal election, NRU will rotate through the Regions of York, Durham, Peel, Halton reporting on interesting municipal races. In the fifth week of the rotation, a roundup of interesting races in Waterloo Region, City of Hamilton and Simcoe County will be published.

HUMAN SERVICES PLANNING BOARD

New advisory board

York Region has created a new board with cross-sector voices around the table speaking up for newcomers, the aging population and low income earners as the region continues to grow.

The human services planning board will have 24 members representing hospitals, school boards, police, government and a variety of service organizations in the region. The inaugural board will serve until November 2014 and be co-chaired by **York Catholic District School Board** education director **Susan LaRosa** and **City of Vaughan** regional councillor **Joyce Frustaglio**.

The board evolved out of the human services planning coalition, which was a 16-member advisory body established by the region in 2001 to integrate planning and funding for human services.

“The new human services planning board represents York Region’s commitment to a strategic and collaborative approach when addressing the growing demands and pressures that our human services sector continues to face,” said region chair **Bill Fisch**.

“It will serve as a united voice at Queen’s Park and Ottawa as we seek to address the human service funding inequities in York Region.”

Some of the pressures and trends facing the York Region human services sector are: population growth as the region expects to add 23,000 residents annually over the next two decades; socio-economic issues such as an increase in low-income households with children; and less funding per capita from the province for health care and social services.

As well, the region has a waiting list for social housing that had 6,472 applicants on it as of September 2009—a 13.3 per cent increase from September 2008.

The board also will have to consider strategies to support and remove barriers for the region’s newcomers and the population over 65 years old. In 2006, about 10 per cent of the region’s population was 65 years or older and the demographic is expected to double by 2031.

“The creation of this board and its action-driven mandate will lead to healthier, stronger and more cohesive neighbourhoods and potentially reduce the need for costly intervention services down the road,” said **Town of Markham** deputy mayor **Jack Heath**, a member of the new board.

LaRosa added: “with board members now in place, we are excited to begin developing action plans and engage the human services sector.”

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BOARD MEMBERS

Joyce Frustaglio, City of Vaughan regional councillor and Human Services Planning Board of York Region co-chair

Susan LaRosa, York Catholic District School Board education director and Human Services Planning Board of York Region co-chair

Isabel Araya, Vaughan Community Health Centre executive director

Jim Baird, Town of Markham development services commissioner

Deborah Bonk Greenwood, Vaughan Chamber of Commerce president and CEO

Catherine Campbell, ministries of Culture, Citizenship and Immigration and Health Promotion regional advisor

Wyn Chivers, Community Home Assistance to Seniors executive director

Patricia Cousins, Social Enterprise for Canada CEO

David Cox, Southlake Regional Health Centre human resources and occupation health and safety director

Tina DiSimone, Seneca College faculty of applied arts and health sciences dean

Kirsten Eastwood, Women’s Centre of York Region executive director

Bill Fisch, York Region chair
Stephen Gaetz, York University faculty of education associate dean

Bill Hogarth, York Region District School Board education director (retired)

Eric Jolliffe, York Regional Police administration deputy chief

Elizabeth McIsaac, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council executive director

Sandy McMillan, Ministry of Training, College and Universities service delivery manager

Sylvia Pivko, Blue Hills Child and Family Centre executive director

Rehana Sumar, Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold acting executive director

Ken Thurston, York Region District School Board education director

Adelina Urbanski, York Region community and health services commissioner

Victoria van Hemert, Central Local Health Integration Network senior director

Colleen Zakoor, York Region Canadian Mental Health Association CEO

Daniele Zanotti, United Way of York Region CEO



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GTA in Brief

Power plant buffers

Late last week **Citizens for Clean Air** expressed support for a private member's bill introduced at Queen's Park by Oakville MPP **Kevin Flynn** and called on all MPPs to support the proposed Separation Distances for Natural Gas Power Plants Act. The proposed legislation, Bill 8, would ban construction of natural gas-fired power plants within 1,500 metres of any lands zoned for residential, school, nursery or health-care uses due to safety concerns. The bill went through second reading last week.

While the bill's scope is province-wide, it comes on the heels of a lengthy dispute between the **Town of Oakville** and the **Ontario Power Authority**, which awarded a contract to **TransCanada Corporation** for the construction of a 900-megawatt, \$1.2-billion natural gas-fired power plant on industrial lands near a residential area in the town. The proposed site, at 1400 Royal Windsor Drive, is within 400 metres of a residential neighbourhood.

The town, and Mayor **Rob Burton** in particular, has been very vocal in its opposition to the proposed power plant, sending letters to provincial and federal ministers and officials, including Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**, in an attempt to prevent the facility's construction.

Most recently, **TransCanada Corporation** launched a court action seeking an Ontario Superior Court of Justice order permitting the facility. TransCanada has also launched an **Ontario Municipal Board** appeal against the town committee of adjustment's refusal of severance and minor variance applications, as well as an appeal against the town for denying site plan approval.

Meanwhile, town council has extended the interim control by-law until March 30, 2011 and TransCanada is seeking leave to appeal a December 2009 decision upholding the interim control by-law.

The Ontario Power Authority awarded the contract for the facility's construction to TransCanada in September of last year and the plant is expected to open in February 2014. (See *NRU-GTA Edition* October 7, 21 and 28, November 18 and December 9 and 30, 2009, and February 3 and 10, March 17 and 31, 2010.)

DURHAM

New downtown Ajax office

Ajax mayor **Steve Parish** was on hand last Thursday for the groundbreaking of a new, 6,400-sq.ft. office building in the Pickering Village area of Ajax, at the corner of Old Kingston Road and Elizabeth Street. The building, set for completion this fall, will house new headquarters for the **Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board**, an independent national review agency for overseeing advertising of pharmaceutical and natural health products. The town sees the project as a significant step towards the revitalization of its downtown area, something which it has been working towards for some time.

Ajax floodplain meeting

Ajax will co-host a public open house to discuss an environmental assessment being conducted on the Carruthers Creek watershed to confirm and refine the creek's floodplain. The EA follows revised information from the **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority** that shows an expanded area at risk of flooding. The EA is expected to include flood prevention and mitigation options and solutions. TRCA and the town will jointly host the meeting, scheduled May 6 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Ajax

Community Centre, 75 Centennial Road.

Ajax transportation OPA approved

On Monday **Ajax** council approved part of its official plan review. Council deferred official plan amendment number 40, dubbed "Ajax Forward, Vibrant Streets," at its April 12 meeting, but voted in favour of the amendment April 26. The document updates the official plan to include policies from the town's transportation master plan, approved in 2007. The amendment follows the second phase of the town's five-year official plan review.

Nuclear management in Clarington

Earlier this month the federal government awarded **AECOM Canada Ltd.** with a \$10-million contract for a new long-term waste management facility in the Port Granby community of the **Municipality of Clarington**. The facility will manage low-level radioactive waste in the area, about 500,000 cubic metres of which are currently housed at a nearby older site and need to be moved. The contract includes design and construction of a new facility and supporting infrastructure, as well as a plan for the remediation of the existing facility. The funding for the contract comes from the federal Port Hope Area Initiative, which seeks to remediate old nuclear waste in Clarington.

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GTA OMB News

Vaughan appeal goes ahead

In a decision issued April 19, board member **Jyoti Zuidema** dismissed a motion from **Nashville Landowners Group Inc.** seeking to dismiss **Paul Mantella's** appeal against an official plan amendment approved by the **City of Vaughan** to redesignate lands in the Kleinburg-Nashville community to permit development of 2,625-residential units and some commercial space in an area running along the east side of Huntington Road, between Major Mackenzie Drive and Nashville Road.

The motion charges that Mantella's appeal is frivolous and vexatious. Arguments in support of the motion noted that Mantella sought to delay the planning process, as evidenced by his desire to adjourn the hearing of the motion. It was also noted that Mantella is the sole appellant; the city, region and province have not appealed the official plan amendment in question.

The board subsequently considered the issues raised by Mantella in his appeal to determine if legitimate land use planning concerns arise from such issues. While the board determined that Mantella's issues with the Trans-Canada pipeline and servicing of the lands affected by the appealed amendment did not warrant a hearing, it found two other issues to be pertinent to the amendment.

Mantella's issues surrounding density and traffic and transportation were determined to warrant a full hearing. The board dismissed the motion, allowing a hearing of Mantella's appeal.

Solicitor **Ira Kagan (Kagan, Shastri)** represents Nashville Landowners Group Inc. Solicitor **Steven Zakem (Aird & Berlis)** represents the City of Vaughan. Solicitor **Gabe Szobel** represents York Region. Solicitors **Mary Flynn-Guglietti** and **Jason Annibale (McMillan)** represent Paul Mantella. (*See OMB Case No. PL091142.*)

Richmond Hill employment lands

In a prehearing decision issued April 19, board member **Jason Chee-Hing** provided an update on an appeal by **Major Mac 404 Realty Inc.** against the **Town of Richmond Hill's** failure to approve a zoning by-law amendment to permit development of office, institutional, retail warehouse, hotel/convention centre and other employment uses on lands located at **1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East**, at the southeast corner of Major Mackenzie Drive East and Leslie Street.

The site is over 29 hectares in size and is currently zoned agricultural and floodplain. The board granted party status to **Baif Development Limited**, which owns lands immediately south of the proposed development site, and **York Region**. The **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority** was granted participation status.

The board set the date for the hearing to run from September 14 to October 1.

Solicitors **Ira Kagan (Kagan, Shastri)** and **Steven Zakem (Aird & Berlis)** represent Major Mac 404 Realty Inc. Solicitor **Roslyn Houser (Goodmans)** represents Baif Development Limited. Solicitor **Antonio Dimilta** represents the Town of Richmond Hill. Solicitor **Gabe Szobel** represents York Region. (*See OMB Case No. PL100050.*) **NRU**

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Clarington to get new testing facility

Last week **Ontario Power Generation** announced it would build a new 250,000-sq.ft. multi-purpose facility in Clarington. The new building would offer a public information centre, security processing centre, office space and a full-size mock-up reactor testing facility for staff to develop the tools required for the refurbishment of the Darlington Nuclear Station. The site of the new facility, at the corner of South Service Road and Osbourne Road in Clarington's Energy Business Park,

requires municipal services, which OPG will be providing. The business park is also the planned site for Durham's proposed waste incinerator.

HALTON

Halton goes local

Halton Region has adopted local sustainable food procurement practices, becoming the first region in the country to do so. The region reached an agreement with **Local Food Plus**, which will see result in sustainable food provided at Halton Regional Centre's cafeteria.

Local Food Plus works with farmers in Ontario, certifying them under certain sustainable food production criteria, such as reduced use of pesticides, safe and fair labour conditions, humane livestock care and reduced energy consumption.

Oakville agrees to hospital funding

The **Town of Oakville** will contribute up-to-\$170 million towards the development of a new hospital. Last week council voted in favour of the contribution, as well as a possible additional \$30 million, if needed, when the project

GTA in Brief continued from page 6

is complete. The majority of the funding approved by council—\$130 million—will be donated in 2015, when the hospital is expected to be substantially complete.

The vote came after several months of public consultation. **Halton Healthcare Services** had requested the town contribute up to \$230 million. The remaining \$40 million is intended to fund life cycle costs over the facility's first 30 years. Residents supported the need for a new hospital, but raised concerns about the tax increases that would be required to fund the facility.

PEEL

Brampton heritage

Last month the **City of Brampton** enacted by-laws designating a number of properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The sites include Shiloh Cemetery, St. John's Edmonton/Snelgrove Cemetery and Page Cemetery. Two houses were also designated, at **77 Main Street South** and **234 Main Street North**. Council enacted the by-laws at its March 10 meeting and the notice was issued two weeks ago.

YORK

Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway development

York Region council approved a report summarizing the planning work that is underway for the under-developed

area around Yonge Street and Highway 7. The area is an urban growth centre shared by the towns of **Richmond Hill** and **Markham**. Staff from **City of Vaughan**, the region, the provincial ministries of municipal affairs and housing and energy and infrastructure, as well as the provincial development facilitator's office are also involved.

To proceed, council approved \$200,000 for a transportation study that will consolidate recently completed local plans and studies and create a broader vision for the overall area. Currently, the intersection has three bus rapid transit lines and

a commuter rail line, as well as a proposed subway extension. When fully developed, the area is forecast to have a population of 48,000 residents and 31,000 employees. (See *NRU-GTA Edition April 7*). NRU



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GTA People

Sheldon H. Wolfson has been appointed commissioner of social and community services at **Halton Region**. Since 2002, Wolfson has been Halton services for seniors director and has worked in the social services field for 30 years.

York Regional Police chief **Armand La Barge** announced he will be retiring after 37 years with the force. He has been chief for eight years and will officially retire December 12. The police board has stated that his replacement will be hired internally by November.

Fay Booker has been appointed chair of the **Niagara Parks Commission** board of directors. Booker is an experienced consultant in the areas of corporate governance and accounting and has worked for Grant Thornton LLP, Deloitte & Touche LLP and CIBC. The appointment takes effect April 21.

Tim Anderson has been promoted to the position of CAO at the **City of Waterloo**. Anderson is an engineer and has worked at the municipality for more than 20 years. He replaces Simon Farbrother, who resigned last December to take the city manager job in Edmonton, Alberta. Anderson begins May 1.