

From: IRENE FORD

Sent: June 16, 2022 7:07 AM

To: Regional Clerk <ClerkGeneralLine@york.ca>; Raynor, Christopher <Christopher.Raynor@york.ca>; Deputy Mayor Jack Heath Markham <jheath@markham.ca>; Don Hamilton <dhamilton@markham.ca>; Frank Scarpitti <mayorscarpitti@markham.ca>; Jim Jones <jjones@markham.ca>; John Taylor <jtaylor@newmarket.ca>; Mayor-Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville <mayor@townofws.ca>; Virginia Hackson <vhackson@eastgwillimbury.ca>; Cc: <council@vaughan.ca>; David West <david.west@richmondhill.ca>; Carmine Perrelli <carmine.perrelli@richmondhill.ca>; Joe Li <joeli@markham.ca>; Margaret Quirk <mquirk@georgina.ca>; Tom Vegh <tvegh@newmarket.ca>; Rob Grossi <rgrossi@georgina.ca>; Emmerson, Wayne <Wayne.Emmerson@york.ca>; Tom Mrakas <tmrakas@aurora.ca>; Steve Pellegrini <spellegrini@king.ca>

Subject: Deputation Withdrawal - Agenda Item H.2.1

Mr. Raynor,

Please include below as my communication. I realize it is late so please attached it to the Committee of the Whole and/or Council agenda as appropriate.

York Region Council,

Withdrawing Deputation Request

I will be withdrawing my deputation request. I had assumed that when York Region adopted the hybrid meeting model that this also applied to the public. I have been informed by the Clerk's office that this only applies to Council Members and staff and that York Region's Administrative Building remains closed to the public. I find this truly surprising as I can't think of anything else that still remains closed for safety reasons due to COVID. I appreciate there may be other technical reasons that preclude deputations from becoming hybrid but the April 28, 2022 staff report did not clearly identify any expectations surrounding deputations nor if members of the public would be able to observe meetings in chamber. I had incorrectly assumed that the hybrid model was also being adopted for the public. That a staff report omitting, or at least was not more clear to define expectations around deputations/public in-person attendance at Council meetings, speaks to a culture in which the most important stakeholder, the public, wasn't important enough for staff or Council to clearly identify of contemplate how a hybrid process would be implemented or identify and provide reasons why it was not being adopted at the time.

Since York Region Council has figuratively and literally shut the public out of the decision making process I have chosen to join the demonstration in front of the York Region Administrative building organized by Stop Sprawl York Region. It was an action offered to residents who felt that it was pointless to give deputations because to date York Region Council has been far too eager to listen and support landowner/developer requests as well as lobbyists like BILD. York Region Council refused to heed to the recommendations of their own staff as well as the requests and pleas from residents, NGOS or ENGOS. Symbolically, especially after learning the administrative building is 'closed to the public', it feels more appropriate to stand outside and not participate as none of the input/feedback that spoke to the public interest to not support an extensive urban boundary expansion from actual members of the public, ENGOS, NGOs was incorporated into the plan in any meaningful way. It was to some extent in policies but it was still limited.

The effect of Councils decisions is that York Region will be at greater risk both financially, legally because the urban growth projections are unrealistic. In the end the urban boundary expansions appear more like a wish list than a plan. Staff will be continually trying to manage the budget to account for unrealized growth and our existing communities will be starved of capital funding and receive only the bare minimum. The draft Official Plan will compound the risks that will come with Climate Change and put current and future residents lives and properties at greater risk. It has failed to address Climate Change with the urgency it demands, the De Racho is only the beginning I fear. Severe weather events are on the rise as is flooding. The more you pave the harder it will be to adapt and mitigate the impacts of Climate Change.

East Gwillimbury Whitebelt Lands

I remain fundamentally opposed to the massive extent of white belt lands in the absence of any known servicing solution. This is financially and legally irresponsible of Council to have supported a privately paid consultant report completed by BILD and the local landowners and to have ignored your staff who only recommended 25% of the lands for development (versus 75% approved). It is shortsighted, reckless to support such a loss of farmland when the ability of York Region to achieve the urban growth is anything but certain. It is also a failure of policy because our farmland is being bought up at an alarming rate by speculators who know they can court Council's and elicit the land use approvals to facilitate development.

I am particularly concerned due to the creative means by which York Region is advancing infrastructure through negotiation of contracts. e.g Mount Forest Expansion, Block 27 Advancing Servicing. If they aren't going to recoup costs would this not suggest there is something wrong with the way development fees have been set?

ORM Motion

I would like to point out that the ORM lands in Stouffville have being removed from the maps because this was not in provincial conformity. I have thought since last Fall that it is highly unethical for Council to insist that staff proceed to plan for something that they have clearly said is not compliant with the ORM Act and then force them to put it in the Official Plan regardless. In hindsight I wonder if Mayor Lovatt's motion to remove these lands ever should have been allowed on the Council floor since Section 9.2 of the [procedure by-law](#) states: The Chair will decline to put to a vote motions that are not within the jurisdiction of Council. I believe there are other more diplomatic ways this matter could have been handled that would have shown greater respect towards York Region's Planning staff and not compromise their ability to comply with the OPPI Professional Code of Conduct.

ROPA7

ROPA7 lands have expanded to be pretty much all the greenbelt 'fingers' in Vaughan and Markham. The history or context is as follows.

- Staff were looking at a high-bred policy for these areas since 2019 as directed when the Block 41 Secondary Plan was approved (another motion from Regional Councillor Jackson). They did not want to go straight to rural as they agree it's too open and does not protect the environmental features that come with the prime agr. designation

- Enter the private landowners ROPA7 request which essentially became the policy direction and created a false narrative that the argument was about rural vs. agriculture when it was actually about recognizing that these areas are part of the Regional Greenlands System with unique endangered species, biodiversity, hydrological and natural heritage features that provide connectivity with the even more narrow linear Greenbelt designated urban rivers and valleys.
- As the OP is currently written allowed rural uses are more restrictive than the greenbelt plan, limit commercial and institution uses See Section 5.3
- I would prefer for it to remain agriculture but am relieved to find it is restricted in the draft OP but....
- Section 5.3.7 d makes me nervous as recreational is not a defined term and Block 41 has some pretty big chunks. I could see a Vaughan Councillor being ready with a motion to champion a community center
- I believe that approval of the OP will render ROPA7 mute but the application served it become the policy direction for York Region's Greenbelt Fingers in Vaughan & Markham and interfered with staff's ability to present their own policy when the Official Plan Policy Directions Report and ROPA7 came forward on the same agenda last Jun, 2021.

Request 1: Please define recreational in 5.3.7d applicable to Greenbelt Fingers in Markham and Vaughan

5.3.6 That rural lands within the linear river valleys of the Greenbelt Protected Countryside shown on *Map 1C*, that are surrounded by the urbanizing *Designated Greenfield Areas* of Vaughan and Markham, per *Map 1B*, shall be identified in local official plans and protected for natural heritage restoration and *urban agriculture*.

5.3.7 That, notwithstanding policy 5.3.2, permitted uses within the rural lands identified in policy 5.3.6 are limited to the following:

- Passive recreation*;
- Environmental management, restoration, and enhancement; and
- Compatible urban *agricultural uses*;
- Recreational and parklands in accordance with the Greenbelt Plan and local municipal *secondary plans* on the basis of appropriate technical studies and natural systems planning.

Further Changes to the Draft Official Plan

Request 2: Please do not support any of the Motions Brought forward by Regional Councillor Jackson or the requests brought forward by private landowners/developers in the absence of written documented York Region staff support.

While there is likely grey here I wonder if Regional Councillor Jackson has used motions in a manner that is questionably compliant with York Region's Procedural Bylaw. I fail to understand why these motions would not be considered reopening a previous decision of Council. I understand that the draft is a fluid document at this time but last October Council voted upon the draft and there was multiple ways to provide feedback through staff. Should Jackson have been able to bring the motions forward, to open up a decision of Council because staff did not support or accommodate the changes requested by landowners?

I do not believe that the motion for the employment conversion request V26 is an amendment, it is not minor and almost equivalent in size as the original request, the Chair did not make any ruling, even though this was mentioned by Mayor Scarpitti.

Based on the information I am finding, which includes an [unsolicited request from ZZEN group](#) to buy Huntington Rd south of Hwy 7, warehouse applications already submitted...I would strongly suggest that Council reverse their motion to support this.

It might be that community lands for Block 66E is the right designation but it's the process I object to and I don't understand why it is necessary now, unless RC Jackson has yet more planning visions that she alone appears aware of, to share. Here too I am finding conflicting information: is Huntington Rd closed off at Major Mackenzie or has the City of Vaughan entered into a [letter of understanding](#) with MTO to create the Huntington bypass?

I have grave concerns about the manner in which Regional Councillor Jackson is manoeuvring planning decisions through use of member's motions at the lower and upper tier Councils. It very much appears that she is working directly with landowners to support a vision that is not being transparently shared with lower and upper tier Councils or the public. These motions advance vested pecuniary interests and many have great complexity behind them. It is unreasonable to ask Council to vote upon them so late in the process. If Council members chose to support these motions they do so at their own peril.

Blindly accepting what is presented by the landowners/developers who pay professional staff for their opinion this late in the process is foolish and once again will serve vested pecuniary interests over the broader public interest. *Supporting ad-hoc, 11th hour requests is nothing more than gift giving, it is not land use planning.*

Conclusion

All in all it's still a climate driving, sprawling plan that brought more land into the urban boundary than necessary. As a result it will bring significant financial and legal risks to borne by future Regional Councils and staff. However, staff have written strong polices that will hopefully protect the Greenbelt. Council failed to protect the Greenbelt and instead at every opportunity possible sought to pass motions that would to weaken protection and permit develop to creep onto the Greenbelt. **The Greenbelt will always be open for development as long as we have politicians who do not see the Greenbelt as off-limits to development.**

Thank you,
Irene Ford

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- b. Environmental management, restoration, and enhancement; and
- c. Compatible urban *agricultural uses*;
- d. Recreational and parklands in accordance with the Greenbelt Plan and local municipal *secondary plans* on the basis of appropriate technical studies and natural systems planning.