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Aberfeldy Crescent,

Thornhill.

May 10, 2012.

Re: Name Change for Markham

Dear Council Member,

I am writing to express serious concerns I have with the kind of process this term's Council appears to have adopted, the CAO's report and the comments of some councillors. Personally I have no strong feelings about the name change itself, although it did provoke the strongest reaction I have seen yet among the leadership team of the German Mills Residents Association.

Process

It is apparent to me that Council is becoming increasingly detached from the residents it is supposed to represent. Many matters appear to come to committee and council predetermined, and it appears that it really does not matter what your residents have to say on matters. Yes, you are going through the motions, providing an hour before the meeting on the 29th for public input, with the vote to take place at the same meeting, but how much time does that give councillors to consider public opinion, explore any of the points residents may bring up, and discuss those points before voting? Having the vote not just on the same day but at the very same meeting where you provide the opportunity for public input screams predetermination and disregard for public opinion. This is so far removed from the careful, considerate and respectful approach Markham Council has taken in the past, I find it very disappointing. Some Council members also appear to have decided and made up their minds before hearing from residents. I would remind Council that Bill 51 gives the public the right to input and to input early in the process, not right at the end just before the vote. What harm would it do to separate the public meeting from the council vote by a couple of weeks or even leave it until September?

Town Reports

Another problem which is becoming glaringly obvious is a total lack of balance in town reports, and the complete absence of a down side. In this case CAO Taylor has written a magnificent report in favour of the name change but is it not important any more to consider the disadvantages of each and every initiative and to see what can be done to address those disadvantages. Attracting a talent pool for example often comes in the form of workers and their families rather than just workers, and it is often perceived as less attractive for people to raise their children in cities. Cities are also often perceived as less friendly and less caring places, with higher crime rates and other social problems. We have small town problems, driveways too wide, fences too high, parking at the wrong time etc, not gangs and guns. So isn't it equally important to look at the upside of being a town and working that into the fabric of the new identity, instead of ignoring it?

Where is the link to the resident poll which Mr. Taylor claims supports the name change? I would like to

see the details of that survey. The costs are described as "manageable" and "not significant (i.e. likely less than a few thousand dollars)", but that is then followed by a big "if". Now I ask you, for a municipality claiming to be fiscally responsible so many times in the report, is that any way to report the costs of this initiative and this from the CAO of the Corporation? I notice there is no mention of the potential arena debt.

Councillor Comments

Even more disappointing is to have one councillor say the public should not be consulted and that the change is good for us. Does Council need to be reminded that we live in a democracy, that we have representative government, that council members should be consulting with their constituents on a regular basis, representing their views at Council and that we have a highly educated population who can think for themselves and don't need or appreciate the paternalistic approach of being told what is good for us? **Residents are not against change. We want to see positive change which upholds our quality of life as promised by all levels of government and as referenced in the CAO's report many times.** We can't all live in large expensive homes in the middle of residential neighbourhoods, nicely removed from the changes taking place along the edges of those neighbourhoods. And those good planning principles we hear about such as building setbacks are useless when they fail to solve the negative changes residents face such as massive shadowing. We need to maintain quality of life for all residents in Markham, not just for some residents and we can achieve that if the emphasis is on residents instead of on building units, profits, development charges etc..

Change in Markham is coming fast and furious, so much so it is difficult for residents to keep up with every new issue. Even so, I want to emphasize we are not against change, many residents want to see the introduction of an Integrity Commission and a Lobbyist Registry in Markham for example. Those changes would be very welcome, but we don't see those positive, progressive changes coming from Council. Why is that?

Summing up briefly, I am neither against or for the name change. I object to the process being pre-determined, compressed and fast-tracked unnecessarily, to the lack of respect for and inappropriate timing of public input, to reports which are one-sided and claims which are unsubstantiated and to premature and insensitive councillor comments.

Sincerely,

Eileen Liasi

Resident East Thornhill



Hau, Lucy

Subject: FW: Town or City

From: Heath, Jack
Sent: Tuesday, May 22, 2012 01:06 PM
To: Carol and Bob Baird
Cc:
Subject: RE: Town or City

Thank you.

I ask the Clerk to add this to the correspondence for the meeting.

Jack Heath

Deputy Mayor of Markham & York Region Councillor
905-415-7506 Cell 416-464-5517
jheath@markham.ca

From: Carol and Bob Baird
Sent: May 21, 2012 10:58 AM
To: Campbell, Colin; Heath, Jack
Cc:
Subject: Town or City

Hi both

I will be out of town on 29th, and unable to attend the meeting..

My personal opinion is that the proposed change is unnecessary, and the reasons put forward are largely spurious.

Council has no mandate for a change of this kind, which should be put to the general electorate in the form of a referendum.

Bob Baird

Hau, Lucy

Subject: FW: Markham council Meeting

From: Chiu, Alex
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 6:00 PM
To: Hau, Lucy
Subject: Fw: Markham council Meeting
Importance: High

Print for tonight

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

From: Patrick Regina [<mailto:Patrick.Regina@hilton.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 05:51 PM
To: Chiu, Alex
Cc: emma.woolfenden@markhamsuites.com <emma.woolfenden@markhamsuites.com>; 'Rob Kadlovski' <rob@nicholbys.com>
Subject: RE: Markham council Meeting

Good Afternoon Councillor Chiu,

Please accept my sincere apologies for not being able to attend this evening.

Markham is a great place to live with many of the attributes of a city already... as a town, the outlook is different than if we had city status, especially as it relates to potential visitors from out of province, and even more so for international travellers which directly impacts what business and tourism Markham ultimately attracts especially from the Meetings & Incentives sector.

Becoming a city will help raise our overall profile, and as residents and stakeholders of Markham we will no doubt benefit from achieving this status, as it will attract more investors and funding for projects to improve infrastructure and bring on more world class facilities such as the Pan/Am Aquatic Centre and the Markham International Sports Training Academy where we can attract the athletes to train in our city and benefit not only from spectator Sports but also participatory Sports.

It is my opinion that a city status will attract high-profile businesses to set up what will hopefully be a large concentration of Head Offices which will provide employment for the residents of Markham.

Overall, gaining city status could give Markham that enhanced recognition that helps to bring new investment, drive overnight receipts, give us the opportunity to compete on a level playing field against the other Regional Tourism Jurisdictions, and secure its future as a successful destination for the many years to come.

Yours in Hospitality,
PATRICK A. REGINA - General Manager

HILTON TORONTO/MARKHAM SUITES CONFERENCE CENTRE & SPA
T: +1 905 415 2614 F: +1 416 540 5069 T: F: +1 905 415 2624
5000 Woodbine Avenue, Markham, ON L3R 1G5, Canada