

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 **WARD(S):** 3

TITLE: **BLOCK 33 YORK REGION RESTORATION PROJECT
BLOCK 104, PLAN 65M-3910 AND BLOCK 67, PLAN 65M-3903
SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF TESTON ROAD AND WESTON
ROAD**

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval from the Committee of the Whole to direct compensation money collected by York Region from the unauthorized tree removals which occurred on 9465 Weston Road to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority ('TRCA') owned lands within Block 33 as opposed to Block 32.

Report Highlights

- York Region in 2021 levied a fine on 9465 Weston Limited under their Forestry Conservation By-law 2013-68 for unauthorized tree removals that occurred on 9465 Weston Road.
- Vaughan Council on June 22, 2021, adopted the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole (Public Meeting) to direct the money collected from the unauthorized tree removal to the Vellore Woods Community in Block 32.
- York Region, in consultation with the TRCA, could not identify appropriate lands within Block 32 which would allow woodland restoration at a density that satisfies the definition of woodland in the York Region Forestry Conservation By-law 2013-68.
- Alternatively, suitable lands were identified within Block 33 to which the City is seeking authority from Council to advise York Region to proceed with their proposed restoration project.

Recommendations

1. THAT the compensation money collected through the York Region Forestry Conservation By-law 2013-68 from the unauthorized tree removals on 9465 Weston Road be directed to the TRCA owned subject lands identified in Block 33, being Block 104 of Plan 65M-3910 and Block 67 of Plan 65M-3903, shown on Attachment 1.

Background

The subject lands (the 'Subject Lands') are located on the south-east corner of Teston Road and Weston Road, legally described as Block 104 of Plan 65M-3910 and Block 67 of Plan 65M-3903, as shown on Attachment 1.

The unauthorized removal of approximately 1.54 ha of protected woodlot occurred on 9465 Weston Road

9465 Weston Road previously contained approximately 1.54 ha of woodlot area which was removed without authorization between 2019 and 2020 (the 'Impact Site'), to which York Region levied a conviction and charges in 2021 for the removal pursuant to the York Region Forest Conservation By-law 2013-68, resulting in \$155,000 collected for woodlot restoration purposes (the 'compensation money').

On May 3, 2021, the owners of 9465 Weston Road (9465 Weston Ltd.) submitted Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision files OP.21.011, Z.21.018 and 19T-21V004 (the 'Applications') on these lands to permit a residential subdivision.

On June 22, 2021, Vaughan Council adopted the June 14, 2021, Committee of the Whole Public Meeting report, as amended, which recommended:

- "That Staff and Local & Regional Councillors work with the Region of York to ensure the money collected from the unauthorized tree removals on this site be directed to the Vellore Woods Community in Block 32 in full."

Previous Reports/Authority

Previous reports relating to the restoration project are available in the following links:

9465 Weston Limited Public Meeting Report:

[June 14, 2021 Committee of the Whole \(Public Meeting\) Report, Item 5, Report No. 36](#)

9465 Weston Limited Technical Report:

[June 21, 2022 Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report, Item 10, Report No. 30](#)

Analysis and Options

York Region, in consultation with the City of Vaughan and TRCA, conducted a review to determine appropriate restoration sites to utilize the compensation funds within proximity to the impact area. Areas initially identified within Block 32 were however not found to be large enough to meet the definition of woodland in the York Region Forestry Conservation By-law 2013-68 and compensate for the full amount of woodland loss. An expanded review of potential restoration sites identified the Subject Lands located within Block 33 as being able to accommodate the full amount of woodland loss and were considered appropriate for the compensation funds to be directed towards.

The Impact Site and the Subject Lands are both located within Ward 3 and the Humber River watershed and are approximately 3.5 km from each other (Attachment 2). The Subject Lands are owned by the TRCA and contain a recreational trail for residents.

The Subject Lands are within a protection catchment, which identifies them as being in good condition but requiring attention so that they can remain as such, according to the Compensation Restoration Project Selection Brief prepared by the TRCA, dated December 13, 2022. The protection catchment identifies that poor water quality indicators are present likely due to the Subject Lands proximity to Teston Road and Weston Road and lack of natural cover, which may be impacting the overall health of the Humber River in this area. The Subject Lands are therefore identified within an area of high-level priority for restoration which would benefit from the compensation plantings. Native tree and shrub plantings on the Subject Lands will add natural habitat, connectivity and increase the quality of the greenspace, which will also help address the poor water quality indicator by limiting the level of pollutants reaching the river through increasing groundwater infiltration, transpiration and evapotranspiration (process of moving water from the earth's surface to the atmosphere).

The details of the restoration project are illustrated on Attachment 3, and includes the planting of 1,750 trees, 3,500 shrubs and 5,250 woody stems throughout an approximately 1.75 ha area of the Subject Lands between the Humber River and existing trail. These plantings will help shade the Humber River, improve fish and wildlife habitat, increase connectivity and natural cover, and limit the level of pollutants reaching the Humber River. At a larger scale, the improved habitat will add a valuable corridor connection and cover for bird, mammal, and amphibian species within the area while adding to an existing greenspace for residents to enjoy. The project is proposed to be implemented in 2023, with ongoing monitoring and maintenance in subsequent years.

Financial Impact

There are no financial requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Recommendation of this report will direct York Region to proceed with restoration plantings that will improve the ecological function on the Subject Lands and in this area of the Humber River Watershed.

Conclusion

The proposed restoration plantings on the Subject Lands are a suitable use of the compensation funds within Ward 3 which provide woodland restoration at a density that satisfies the definition of woodland in the York Region Forestry Conservation By-law 2013-68 and will positively contribute to the health of the Humber River watershed and resident's enjoyment of the Subject Lands. Accordingly, staff have no objection to the request of York Region to direct the compensation funds to Block 33, as noted in the Recommendation of this report.

For more information, please contact: Chris Cosentino, Senior Planner at ext. 8215.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Context Map
3. Restoration Map and Details

Prepared by

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Nancy Tuckett, Director of Development Planning, ext. 8529

Approved by

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Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management

Reviewed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri'.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager