

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (1) – APRIL 9 ,2024

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Distributed April 5, 2024

SC1. Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management, dated
April 5, 2024

Subject

Re: Expediting Development Approvals

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**STAFF COMMUNICATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

SC1.

Staff Communication

CW(1) - April 9, 2024

DATE: April 5, 2024

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION – CW (1) April 9, 2024**
Expediting Development Approvals

Purpose

The purpose of this Staff Communication is to update Council of continued staff effort to streamline the development review and planning approval process at the City of Vaughan.

Background

For a Zoning By-law Amendment application, s. 34(12)(a) of the *Planning Act* stipulates that “at least one public meeting is held for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to make representations in respect of the proposed by-law”. Policy 10.1.4.1 of the City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010), however, states that a new public meeting for a planning application(s) shall automatically (**emphasis added**) be required when any of the following circumstances occur:

- i. *any application(s) that has not been considered by Council within two years after the date it was considered at a previous statutory public meeting; and/or*
- ii. *an application(s) has been significantly amended, such as an increase to the proposed density and/or building height, beyond what was proposed and considered by Council at a previous public meeting.*

Regarding the final approval of a plan of subdivision, s. 51(58) of the *Planning Act* states the following:

*“(58) Upon presentation by the person seeking to subdivide, the approval authority may, if satisfied that the plan is in conformity with the approved draft plan and that the conditions of approval have been or will be fulfilled (**emphasis added**), approve the plan of subdivision and, once approved, the final plan of subdivision may be tendered for registration.”*

The City’s current practice requires all conditions be cleared before the plan of subdivision can be finally approved and registered.

Analysis and Options

It is restrictive in the City's Official Plan to require a rezoning application that has not received a decision for more than two years to automatically go through another public meeting regardless of any changes made to the proposal. While it is justifiable when there are major changes made to the application, it only causes delays when there are minimum changes to the plan.

Staff is of the opinion that this Official Plan policy should be revisited through the City's ongoing Official Plan Review and possibly revised for better conformity with the *Planning Act*.

A draft plan approval often carries hundreds of conditions from various internal and external agencies and parties. Fulfilling these conditions may take a significant amount of time and effort from both the City and the applicant and is difficult to coordinate. It often creates a "bottleneck" when developers are pressed to register their plans of subdivision during a seasonal rush.

A building permit cannot be issued if it is reliant on the plan of subdivision being registered first to create lots and blocks. This is part of the reason for some developers choosing to start construction without permits and accept the fines and risks as a lesser cost than delay and winter construction costs. It also delays "housing starts" and adversely impacts the City's efforts to deliver housing sooner.

To accelerate registrations at the land registry office, the City may wish to consider potentially accepting undertakings from applicants on a case-by-case basis, where deemed appropriate, subject to conditions and to the agreements as may be considered necessary by the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management, in a form acceptable to the Deputy City Manager, Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor.

This will not only help the City to bring housing to the marketplace expeditiously when circumstances merit, but also cut down on unnecessary enforcement proceedings and safety risks for workers building homes and businesses without proper permit reviews and issuances.

Conclusion

Staff are assessing and determining the need for a second public meeting based on changes to the original application instead of the time since the first public meeting and are considering proposed adjustments to the relevant policies in the City's Official Plan as part of its ongoing Official Plan Review while maintaining conformity with the *Planning Act*.

Furthermore, Council may consider allowing the Deputy City Manager of Planning and Growth Management to potentially accept executed undertakings from applicants to fulfill conditions of approval pursuant to s. 51(58) of *Planning Act* to help expedite housing delivery, as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis and subject to such terms and other agreements as may be deemed necessary by the Deputy City Manager, Planning

and Growth Management, and in a form acceptable to the Deputy City Manager, Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor.

For more information, please contact Christina Bruce, Director of Policy Planning & Special Programs, ext. 8231 or Nancy Tuckett, Director of Development Planning, ext. 8529.

Approved by

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

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management