



WESTON DOWNS RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Blackburn Blvd., Woodbridge, Ontario,

www.westondownra.ca

c21 Communication COUNCIL: Oct 2/19 PH Rpt. No. 26 Item 5

October 1, 2019

Mayor and Members of Council
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, Ontario
L6A 1T1

RE: Council Meeting October 2nd, 2019
Report #26, Item #5
Official Plan Amendment File OP.19.003
Zoning By-law Amendment File Z.19.008
Velmar Centre Property Limited Applications
4101 Rutherford Road

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Weston Downs Community, a community of 1876 homes, we would like to express our disappointment at the lack of respect and undo stress that the Velmar Centre Property Limited Application has caused to the citizens of our community. We oppose the approval of the Official Plan Amendment OP.19.003 and Zoning By-Law Amendment Z.19.008 submitted by Velmar Centre Property Limited to permit the development of a 7-storey mixed-use residential apartment building that includes 139 residential units and 615 m² of commercial space, at 4101 Rutherford Road. We respectfully ask that council reject this application which is an example of poor planning which will financially benefit a developer at the expense of an established community.

LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE EXISTING COMMUNITY

The Weston Downs Community was created, planned and approved over three decades ago. The community is unique in character and has specific urban design guidelines. This was the vision of a world renowned developer and it was approved and supported by council and staff. The vision was then sold to the residents of Weston Downs, many who are the original purchasers of homes in this community. It is now unfair for council and staff to disregard this original vision and change the character and the uses in the Weston Downs community. The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 clearly maintains that in Community Areas with established development, new development must be "designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area." This proposed 7-storey mixed-use residential apartment does not respect nor reinforce the existing community and its character.

Stop using the province's More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan to support this example of poor and disrespectful planning. The Honorable housing minister is clear in his letter dated October 17th, 2019 that it is the Vaughan Official Plan of 2010, not the Province that provides direction for new development under the Housing Supply Action Plan. The Vaughan Official Plan maintains that in Community Areas with established development, new development must "be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area." Destroying an established area at the expense of poor planning that contravenes established building goals and guidelines is in violation of our human rights, community safety and enjoyment, as well as respect for the residents and your constituents who live in this established community. Steven Clark, Minister of Municipal and Housing Affairs states the following: <http://westondownsra.ca/2019/09/18/support-from-our-mpp-must-read-letter/>

UNFAIR PROCESS

The Weston Downs Ratepayers Association has been attempting to retrieve a copy of the original Urban Design Guidelines and the Weston Downs Master Plan from the City, but have been told that it no longer exists. This is an unacceptable answer, especially knowing that Weston Downs was built in several phases and there must be more than one copy of each of these reports in the City of Vaughan archives. The community has asked for evening meetings since the majority of the residents work during the day, but our request has been ignored and not even responded to. Finally, I would like to bring to your attention the issue of transparency; by violating established rules, regulations, acts and circumventing processes, the City unfairly supports builders over the taxpayers living in the established Weston Downs Community.

CONTRAVENTION OF THE PLANNING ACT

The Notice of Official Plan Amendment, Rezoning and Site Plan was removed at approximately 11:00am on Wednesday, September 18th, 2019, the day following the public hearing. A resident of Weston Downs witnessed a man removing the sign. With the removal of the sign, the perception of the residents is that the application has been withdrawn. We contacted the City of Vaughan with respect to the missing signs on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, via an email to our local councilor, Rosanna DeFrancesca, city planner Clement Messere and Mauro Peverini, Director of Development. To date, the signs have not been replaced and no explanation has been provided for the removal and contravention of the planning act with respect to the signs. Originally, the notice on Velmar was placed under tree branches and only made visible upon the City of Vaughan responding to our complaint. The contraventions with respect to the notice of the Official Plan Amendment, Rezoning and Site Plan is an example of the lack of transparency and disrespect to the residents of Weston Downs. As of today, Tuesday, October 1, 2019, we are reporting that the sign taken down on September 18 @11am (immediately after the Public Hearing on September 17 @7pm) was not reinstalled as per city planner request; but was ignored and is in violation of the planning act:
https://www.vaughan.ca/services/business/development_planning_applications/Forms/Notice%20Sign.pdf

TRAFFIC INFILTRATION

In 2004, the traffic infiltration was 2,200 cars/day and Vaughan Council agreed to and considered that volume as a major issue. The fact that the traffic has grown to more than 12,000 cars/day with no action to date and Council choosing to ignore the increased volumes for 139 short term rental apartments is in total contravention of the peaceful enjoyment of an established community. Please take the time to see our current "highway traffic" on local community roads putting your constituents and our children at risk daily: <http://westondownsra.ca/>. Weston Downs is not an arterial road nor a mid-block collector road and definitely should not be treated as an alternative to regional roads. It is time for Vaughan to stop the poor planning and instead set up proper infrastructure and plan for healthy, viable communities. The city planners and council have consistently reduced our standard of living in Vaughan by causing gridlock on our roads. Instead of enjoying our City, we spend at least an extra two hours on the road within the city limits of Vaughan due poor traffic circulation and gridlock. Our standard of living and quality of life in Vaughan is being deteriorated by the congestion that is resulting from poor planning. It takes 45-minutes to travel distances that should only be a 10-minute drive because the proper infrastructure does not exist for the ever increasing densities.

ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED:

- Section 9.1.2.2 of the VOP states that new development in Community Areas be designed in a manner that respects and reinforces the physical character of the established neighbourhood. The proposed built form of this 7-storey building is not compatible with the built form of the surrounding community of single-family homes. This proposal does not respect the building types, heights or scale of nearby residential properties.
- This apartment is out of character with the neighbourhood. In fact this community was built as a cohesive community with minimum 60 foot lots and unique urban design guidelines. This apartment building will destroy the character of the community that we have loved and lived in for over three decades. Weston Downs was built with very specific Urban Design Guidelines which are not being respected by this application.
- The density of this proposal is too high. Though the current Official Plan permits a density of no greater than 1.5 FSI, this applicant is proposing a density of 3.14 FSI.
- This proposal will compound the current traffic issues that the Weston Downs community is experiencing with traffic infiltration. Many residents who live to the north and west of Weston Downs cut through our residential streets in order to circumvent the gridlock on Weston Road during the morning and evening rush hours.
- Weston Road and Rutherford Road already experience traffic issues. The current residents of Weston Downs have difficulty turning onto Rutherford Road in the morning not to mention adding an additional 200 or more cars to the problem of turning right or left onto Rutherford. The traffic backs up in part due to the cuing for both the north bound right hand east turn from Velmar to Rutherford Road and the northbound left hand west turn from Velmar to

Rutherford Road. These movements in the morning peak hours will conflict with traffic egression and ingress into the new development.

- This tall and large apartment building will overshadow the tennis court and park which abut the proposed apartment building.
- The tall and large apartment building will cast shadows on the houses that are across the street from this development.
- The setbacks are all inadequate. Encroachment of balconies onto our park are unacceptable and will inhibit the enjoyment of sunshine and the nature.
- There are only 3 parking spaces at grade with the remaining 257 parking spaces located in the 3 underground parking levels. It is clear from this parking situation that this will no longer serve as a local convenience plaza for our neighbourhood. The residents of Weston Downs do not want to run in and out of our local stores by parking underground. The local plaza stores essentially will be unusable for our Weston Downs Community.
- The access in and out of the apartment building complex will not work properly. It is currently difficult to go in and out of the plaza during the morning and afternoon rush since there is a line of cars along Velmar which infiltrate Weston Downs in order to bypass the gridlock on Weston Road and Rutherford Road. It is currently difficult for our current residents to leave their properties as they try to enter the gridlock on Velmar caused by infiltration during these times. How do you expect an additional 200 cars to do this in the morning and afternoon rush?
- The Subject Lands are located in a Source Water Protection vulnerable area referred to as a Wellhead Protection Area-Q2 ('WHPA-Q2') and which must be reviewed and approved to the satisfaction of the TRCA.
- This proposal has directed the commercial space towards the Rutherford Road frontage indicating that they want to encourage a pedestrian friendly environment. This will accomplish the opposite. Without the commercial space on Velmar, our community of approximately 5000 residents will no longer have convenient access to our local plaza establishments.
- It is too soon after the last VOP 2010 review to make such changes to the official plan. Large parts of the plan were not brought into effect until 2019 and parts of it are still unapproved and before the LPAT. Until the whole plan is approved, there should be no further amendments to permit developments such as this one. The City invested a significant amount of time and money into the VOP review and it is not appropriate for a developer to try to change what has just been approved just to increase their profits.
- So disappointed that a developer would submit a medium density plan for a site that the VOP 2010 has designated as low rise mixed use...not medium density or medium rise

- Stop using the province's More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan to support this example of poor and disrespectful planning. The Honorable housing minister is clear in his letter dated today that it is the Vaughan Official Plan of 2010, not the Province that provides direction for new development under the Housing Supply Action Plan. The Vaughan Official Plan maintains that in Community Areas with established development, new development must "be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area."
- The City of Vaughan is meeting the mandate of More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. We have increased densities to meet this mandate at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre where we have the infrastructure both the subway, Highways 400 and 407 to support the increased densities
- Our standard of living and quality of life in Vaughan is being deteriorated by the congestion that is resulting from poor planning. It takes 45-minutes to travel distances that should only be a 10-minute drive because the infrastructure does not exist. For example, most residents avoid the turning on Rutherford Road to go Highway 400 or the Go train in the morning specifically because it will add 15-20 minutes to the morning trip to work. Instead they must go south in order to go north-east.
- There have been comments about the fact that the council would be going against their own planning staff in order to turn this application down. Well I would hope so! Stop the poor planning examples that we see and recognize in this City. Every time you see one of those traffic mirrors when you enter a plaza or condo parking area, you know it is a result of poor planning. Example: Northwest side of Islington and Rutherford Road. Funny that the Weston Downs Ratepayers had pointed this out to the City at the planning stage though our comments were ignored. Look at 86 Woodbridge Avenue Condo where the residents keep complaining that they either hit the wall or are in fender benders because of the narrow entrance in and out of the condo. The residents complain about the steepness of the entry into the underground parking lot, causing some of the elderly residents to instead break condo rules by parking in the visitor parking spaces. Let's not keep making poor planning decision when we have the opportunity to make excellent and superior planning decisions. We the residents are the ones who are stuck with the aftermath of poor planning.

CONCLUSION

How many more violations are you willing to ignore and accept for developers at the expense of taxpayers living in an established community. Enough is Enough ! Do what is right and what is just by not receiving this **deficient** application, by not accepting to **violate** community rights and by not spending more tax dollars to **circumvent** processes that ultimately break the established rules and regulations that together we live and govern by in this great City of Vaughan.

In conclusion, we ask that Council turn down this application as presented based on the excessive density, traffic issues, ingress and egress issues as well as unsuitable built form. This proposal is

not compatible with the character of the vibrant Weston Downs community. It will cause shadows and traffic issues that will serve to reduce the current resident's enjoyment of their homes and community. This proposal will take away the convenience of visiting our local stores both because of parking issues, traffic and the relocation of the stores. Please do the right thing and support our residents by turning down this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Weston Downs Ratepayers Association

Per:

Rose Savage, Co-president, Weston Downs Ratepayers Association
Victor Lacaria, Co-president, Weston Downs Ratepayers Association
Nadia Magarelli, Co-president, Weston Downs Ratepayers Association