

Deputation to Vaughan City Council July 13, 2010

Mayor Bevelacqua, Regional and Local Councillors, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Pamela Taraday-Levy and I live in the Thornhill area of Vaughan. Personally, I am not opposed to responsible re-development nor are the more than 100 residents I have had an opportunity to hear from.

The real issue is that the Salz re-development proposal that does nothing to enhance or benefit the existing, well established Community in that area. The proposal contains inaccuracies and misinformation that have been outlined by other deputants. It is sad that whoever wrote the reports that went into the proposal did not do a better job stating the real facts, rather than messaging information that cannot be supported.

New developments should observe guidelines specified Vaughan's Official Plan 2010.

I know that the City agrees because on June 30, 2020, the City of Vaughan posted a statement that reads and I quote

“Our objective is to develop a world class city that encompasses good urban design and public spaces that foster community well-being...that remains top of mind. I ask you to stand by your commitment.

These proposals do not support the City's goals. For example, the Yonge Street Study defines urban design, land use and a framework for intensification from the north side of Steeles Avenue between Palm Gate and Yonge Street.

It defines planning policies to bring the area into conformity with both the Region of York and the City of Vaughan's official plans. These policies are specific about the amount of green space, shadowing and much more. The proposals in front of you have largely ignored the existing planning policies.

We were told, by developers, that the higher the buildings, the greater the density, the better the chances of getting the Yonge Street subway extended north of Finch Avenue. That is simply not true. VOP 210 and again 2010 which were developed years ago, factored in the extension of the Yonge Street subway, supported by a population less than half of what is being proposed this evening.

It is true that some developers met with the local ratepayer group and had open houses for the community. However, it is apparent, from the proposals submitted this evening that the suggestions, recommendations and concerns voiced by the community were largely ignored. The community spoke but was not heard.

We all should be listening and working together to develop an integrated plan for facilities that benefit and can be used by the existing community as well as their residents.

There is little provision for additional community facilities for the large increase in population- an increase of more than 20 times the existing community. Most of the facilities mentioned in the proposals are the cities of Toronto and Markham, not in the City of Vaughan. Therefore they are not available to the residents of Vaughan.

It seems that the community is left to the benevolence of the developers to provide the adequate greenspace, community amenities and overall services. I don't know about you, but when I do business, I want everything in writing so that there is accountability. If it's not in black and white, it's not real.

There is little regard for the approx. 230 existing households in the immediate area. We do not need 100 new retail outlets or restaurants. What is needed are large open spaces, parks for sports activities, swings and slides for all children. There are no community facilities planned like a community centre, library, theatre, day care centre, maybe a community tennis court. There is no provision for essential services like doctor's offices, dentists or government offices like the DMV.

Development companies should work together and coordinate their efforts to bring facilities to the existing community. If each of developers took one of the above projects, it would be a giant step in the right direction.

There should also be some consistency in the design plan for the re-development. Right now that area is a mish mash of small strip malls and

now we have a rare opportunity to turn it from an eye sore into a cohesive community.

This is our only chance and the City, development companies and the residents must come to the table and work with City staff and the community to build a world class neighbourhood. These proposals do not support this, with their many inaccuracies and misinformation.

However, there is one more wrinkle that I urge Council to consider. The two proponents before you tonight are members of a land owners group made up of developers who own land in the Yonge/Steeles corridor.

The community asked for an invitation to address this group but there has been no response to date.

Although the community has not been given access, I have learned that the land owners are currently seeking an LPAT hearing date sooner rather than later, and may well be bypassing the confidential mediation with the City. That is not good for the community and the development companies are strong arming the City to accept their proposals. We all know that LPAT has a reputation of approving significant changes to Official Plans and zoning bylaws even against the advise of City Staff and the community. We just don't know what or when.

If we know that changes to OP 2010 are inevitable, I wonder why would Council would ask City Staff to spend time and resources reviewing and commenting on development proposals for the Yonge Steeles area when

the parameters of VOP 2010 are bound to change. That's like asking a basketball player to shoot hoops while blindfolded.

I respectfully ask council to sideline these and all other proposals for the Yonge Street corridor until the decisions of the mediation, if it continues, and LPAT are made public, there is time for review and the developers have meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas with the residents.

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