

C16
Communication
CW (1) – March 2, 2021
Items # - Presentation #2

From: Clerks@vaughan.ca
To: Bellisario, Adelina
Subject: FW: [External] Please read before March 2, 2021 Meeting
Date: March-01-21 9:36:10 AM

From: Leslie Atkinson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, February 28, 2021 10:06 PM
To: Bevilacqua, Maurizio <Maurizio.Bevilacqua@vaughan.ca>; Rosati, Gino <Gino.Rosati@vaughan.ca>; Ferri, Mario <Mario.Ferri@vaughan.ca>; Jackson, Linda <Linda.Jackson@vaughan.ca>; lafrate, Marilyn <Marilyn.lafrate@vaughan.ca>; Carella, Tony <Tony.Carella@vaughan.ca>; DeFrancesca, Rosanna <Rosanna.DeFrancesca@vaughan.ca>; Racco, Sandra <Sandra.Racco@vaughan.ca>; Shefman, Alan <Alan.Shefman@vaughan.ca>
Cc: Clerks@vaughan.ca
Subject: [External] Please read before March 2, 2021 Meeting

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua and Councillors,

First, I must thank you all for the strong leadership you have shown through the current pandemic. You have been creative in the workarounds and communicated positively throughout.

Now I ask that you rise up and provide the same strong leadership on the environment to address the current gap in leadership at the provincial level.

The current provincial government seems to be disregarding climate change and the future impact that it will have within our lifetime and has chosen uncontrolled growth. It is now up to the Municipal, Regional and Federal governments to stand up and show true leadership.

The streamlined Provincial EA and the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) oversteps municipal decision-making and environmental assessment processes, and changes to the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, has created a void and eliminated the ability of this formerly independent organization to be an unbiased oversight body.

As a long term resident and taxpayer of Vaughan, past committee member of Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee and former Executive Director of the York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA), I am concerned about the current and future plans for growth that prioritizes short-term economic development for a few, over the future of the environment and human health and well-being of all. This doesn't fit with the vision I remember Vaughan once had, to grow in an environmentally-sound way.

As a start, I'm asking you to make the environment the number one priority in decision-making and to start protecting land that supports a necessary diverse ecosystem, protect valuable farmland that ensures a local food supply and the moraine that ensures clean water.

The most immediate issue we face is the plan to increase suburban sprawl and build highway 413. I ask that you stand up and stop this and continue with your previous plan to address population increases with development that support intensification and public transit.

I understand you have a meeting March 2, 2021 to discuss such items and since the province seems to want to ignore proper environmental assessments, it is important that the Federal Government provide an independent review of the highway proposal and development and its effects on the social, health, environment, indigenous lands, and historical aspects.

I ask that you:

- request a Federal Environmental Assessment
- reverse Vaughan Council's support of the proposed GTA West Highway and,
- require the Provincial Government to fully assess the solutions identified in the 2018 Independent Advisory Report

Around the world, politicians are listening to the science and working to address climate change. **Sir David Attenborough, spoke at UN Security Council Summit, February 23, 2021** and said *"If we continue on our current path, we will face the collapse of everything that gives us our security: food production, access to fresh water, habitable ambient temperature, and ocean food chains,"* adding *"if the natural world can no longer support the most basic of our needs, then much of the rest of civilization will quickly break down."*

"People today all over the world realize this is no longer an issue which will affect future generations," he said. **"It is people alive today, and, in particular, young people, who will live with the consequences of our actions."**

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres, urged leaders to use their influence during this pivotal year to mobilize others, including financial institutions and the private sector, to do their part.

The City of Vaughan is an important and integral part of the planet, and you as the leaders of this city, are charged with a higher duty to look at the larger, long-term picture and ensure a stable future for the people.

In closing, I ask all of you to stand up for the citizens of Vaughan and provide the leadership we need to ensure a future for our children. Create better solutions and start by saying no to the GTA West Highway, ask for a Federal Environmental Assessment and require the Provincial Government to make the environment a priority and to give back power to the municipalities.

Sincerely,

Leslie Atkinson