

Mr Tony Iacobelli,
Acting Director, Policy Planning & Environmental Sustainability,
City of Vaughan, 2141 Major Mackenzie Dr,
Vaughan, Ontario, L6A 1T1.

RE: ITEM #7 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

April 7, 2021

Vellore Centre - Analysis of Land Use Options

On behalf of the Vellore Woods Ratepayers Association & The Millwood-Woodend Ratepayers Association, the following are additional comments based on today's Staff Report:

First, we wanted to once again sincerely thank Mr Tony Iacobelli, Councillor DeFrancesca, and Mr Bill Kiru for hosting the meeting held on March 3rd 2021, in regards to the Vellore Centre - Analysis of Land Use Options.

Below is our letter to you following our initial discussions, DATED March 8th 2021

The following are additional comments based on the staff report:

We understand that by *maintaining the existing policy*, Vellore Centre is designated as a Local Centre in the Vaughan Official Plan 2010. Policy 2.2.1.1 describes Local Centres as having a mixed-use focus for their respective communities, in a manner that is compatible with the local context. Furthermore, there is another policy, Policy 2.2.5.7 which further provides guidelines and criteria for future planning of Local Centres. A number of these criteria and guidelines are shared by our community, including

- be the focal points for expression of community heritage and character
- Include well designed public open spaces that are either landscaped parks, or public plazas or both in a manner that is appropriate to the local context
- Be predominantly residential in character but include a mix of uses including retail, office and community facilities intended to serve the local population and attract activity throughout the day
- Have a fine grain of streets suitable for pedestrians and cyclists, with appropriate internal links, such as sidewalks and greenways, through the Local Centre and links to the surrounding Community

- Encourage a pedestrian-friendly built form by locating active uses at grade
- Be designed and developed to implement appropriate transition of intensity and use to surrounding neighbourhoods, and/or separation from adjacent Employment Areas.

Another critical component is density and building heights. There should not be any “exceptions” or “exemptions” from this.

Quoted from the City Manager’s Report: The building height restriction to 6-storeys, carried forward from the Vellore Village District Centre Secondary Plan approved in 2005, is an issue of consideration when planning to the 2041 or 2051 planning horizon. Otherwise, the existing policy framework for Local Centres and the ‘Mid-Rise Mixed-Use’ designation, together with guidance documents such as the City-wide Urban Design Guidelines, provides a basis for processing development applications.

Now that our community has confirmed that we would like to maintain existing policies as they would apply to Vellore Centre, **we expect the City of Vaughan to strongly enforce Policy 2.2.5.7 as we have noted above, specifically to those which enforce historical aspects, site plan and strong urban design.**

We cannot stress this enough. Enforcing the URBAN DESIGN to adhere to historical components of this land development is one of the most contentious issues we have. So somewhere in the updating of this land use study findings, we need to create A CLEAR MANDATE AND URBAN DESIGN REQUIREMENT.

In the past, our community has been subject to nightmarish development proposals. The everchanging provincial and regional policies and practices will continue to be a challenge, but hope that moving forward, everyone will respect Vellore Centre for its cultural heritage, and not let it turn into VMC 2.0 .

ORIGINAL SUBMISSION

Dear Mr. Iacobelli,

March 8, 2021

On behalf of the **Vellore Woods Ratepayers Association** and the **Millwood-Woodend Ratepayers Association**, we wanted to extend our sincere thanks to you, your staff, Councillor DeFrancesca, and Mr Bill Kiru for hosting the meeting held on March 3rd 2021, in regards to the **Vellore Centre - Analysis of Land Use Options**.

At that meeting, three available options were presented to us:

1. Maintain Existing Policies
2. Area Specific Study
3. Secondary Plan

After thoroughly explaining each option to us, we are formally going on record to support **OPTION 1: Maintain Existing Policies**. Our community, with the ratepayers associations have worked tirelessly to respect and attempt to protect, the original historical nature of Vellore Village by integrating aspects of a village throughout the Vellore community. All future development applications should continue to respect our village in terms of form and density. A key element of VOP2010 is Chapter 9.1.2.2. 'That in Community Areas with established development, new development be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area'. As we consider future development applications, our expectations are that all future development will continue to respect the unique historical features of **Vellore Village**.

Conversely, we expect The City of Vaughan to strongly enforce those historical aspects, through both site plan and urban design. At the meeting, we quoted and maintain our support of the 2003 Vellore Village Centre Study key recommendations, which spoke specifically to Vision, Transportation, Retail, and Residential components of the area.

And as much as we can say "things have changed" since then, we can equally say that, **now** more than ever, it is crucial that Vellore citizens have a place where "community" is paramount, with gathering spots, main street village components, supporting "small businesses" and enjoying outdoor greenspaces and piazzas. Residents in this district can easily and safely manoeuver their way through the village, still feeling like part of the community, rather than cold, isolated and often disconnected living that is associated with high rise living. If COVID19 pandemic has taught us anything in this past year, it is that human and social connection are both imperative to a City's well-being as well as an individual's well-being.

Case in point, with reference to the current SmartCentre's application which fails miserably at achieving any of the requirements or visions we have stated above. It is also imperative that you understand the history of the SmartCentre's application. Our "support" of their PHASE 1 of this site (Wal-Mart) was contingent upon the PHASE 2 aspect of their plan, which addressed commercial development in keeping with the "village" form of piazza, main street retail, gathering place etc. If this was a private contractual agreement, SmartCentres would be in breach of their contract, failing miserably at maintaining their "end of the bargain." So, it is our strong opinion, that the application as it stands is not compatible with the existing community in terms of massing, heights, setbacks, density and is not conducive to the village feel which we have worked to implement.

In fact, please see attached letter of agreement by SmartCentres and the Vellore Woods Ratepayers Association in regards to this development, made in 2009. After reading this letter, I am confident you will understand our position and steadfast insistence as to WHY we feel the way we feel.

Another application in development is a proposed 12 storey Apartment planned for Fossil Hill/Major Mackenzie Dr (west of Weston Road) which would be constructed in the middle of a two storey residential neighbourhood. Again, this development is out of scale and context to the existing community and has absolutely no respect or regard for the OP in its current form.

Given the challenges of implementing a temporary freeze on development within the Vellore Village community, we respectfully request and urge you that applications before you that affect this study area, be encouraged to consider these Vellore village principles in mind, and that applicants meet with us and our communities when it is safe to do so.

Yours Truly,

Elvira Caria

Chair, Vellore Woods RatePayers Association

****Signed Electronically***

Tim Sorochinsky

Chair, Millwood-Woodend RatePayers Association

****Signed Electronically***

CC: Councillor Rosanna DeFrancesca

Bill Kiru

Vellore Woods Ratepayers Association Executive Members