

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – MAY 26, 2008

ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN (EMP) UPDATE DEFINITION OF “SUSTAINABILITY”, THE “ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC” AND “PRINCIPLES” PRESENTATION BY DPRA INC.

Recommendation

The City Manager recommends that:

1. This report and the presentation by DPRA Inc. be received;
2. The alternative approaches to the definitions of “Sustainability”, the “Environmental Ethic” and “Principles”, which emerged from the Environment Committee/Staff Workshop on May 1, 2008, form the basis for further analysis, with the intention of developing a unified version for inclusion in the draft Environmental Master Plan;
3. The analysis shall include input from the public on sustainability issues emerging from the five Community Visioning Sessions and the Stakeholder Committee meeting.

Economic Impact

Direction to proceed with the preparation of the Environmental Master Plan has been obtained and was included in the 2007 Capital Budget.

Communications Plan

The communications plan for the Environmental Master Plan forms part of the overall Growth Management Communications Strategy, which will also encompass the Official Plan Review and the Master Plan studies.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to bring forward the alternative approaches to defining Sustainability, the Environmental Ethic and the Principles for the EMP, which emerged at the Environment Committee/Staff workshop on May 1, 2008. This will form the basis for further analysis with the intention of developing a single version for inclusion in the initial draft of the Environmental Master Plan. The analysis would be informed by the public input received at the Community Visioning Sessions and at the upcoming Stakeholder Committee meeting.

Background – Analysis and Options

On April 28, 2008 the Environment Committee considered a report entitled “*Environmental Master Plan (EMP) Update – Definition of “Sustainability”, the “Environmental Ethic” and “Principles” – Presentation by DPRA Inc.*” Its purpose was to obtain approval of a draft definition of Sustainability, the Environmental Ethic and Principles for the Environmental Master Plan, subject to input from the Environment Committee. Public comment would then be sought through the Community Visioning Sessions and the Stakeholder Committee.

At the meeting, the Environment Committee raised a number of issues pertaining to the definition of the terms. One of the main concerns was whether the proposed language conveyed the City’s strong commitment to sustainability and the environment. It was the consensus that the terms would be improved if they reflected a more assertive approach

to moving toward a sustainable future, which would more clearly express the City's high level of commitment.

The Environment Committee received the report and the presentation by DPRA Inc. and deferred the matter, pending further consultation with DPRA Inc. This decision was ratified by Council on May 12, 2008.

As a result of the Environment Committee's deferral a workshop session, facilitated by DPRA Inc., was held on May 1, 2008. Eighteen attended, including the members of the Environment Committee, Senior Management and staff representing a number of departments. The results of the workshop are set out in the report from DPRA Inc, which forms Attachment No. 1.

Next Steps

The two versions of the terms produced at the workshop reflect somewhat different approaches but both are well-grounded in the concepts necessary to achieve a more sustainable community. It would now be appropriate to move toward a consolidated version that would be included in the draft Environmental Master Plan. This will require further analysis and it will be important to include input from the public on its thoughts and priorities. This input will be obtained at the five Community Visioning Sessions that will take place in May and June and at the Stakeholder Committee meeting in June.

The draft EMP is expected to be available in September and it will be made widely available for public review and comment, prior to finalization. The draft EMP will be submitted to the Environment Committee for its input, prior to being released for public comment.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020 objective to "Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability" by developing and implementing an Environmental Master Plan as part of the Growth Management Strategy 2031.

Regional Impact

Not Applicable.

Conclusion

In consideration of the initial draft of the definition of Sustainability, the Environmental Ethic and the Principles of the EMP, the Environment Committee determined that these terms needed a more assertive tone in order to reflect the City's commitment to a sustainable future. A workshop was held on May 1, 2008, involving the consultant, the members of the Environment Committee, Senior Management and staff from a number of departments. As a result two new approaches were developed. The two versions are presented in a side-by-side format in Attachment No.1.

The next step will be to move toward a single version, which would be included in the draft Environmental Master Plan. This will require further analysis that will need to be informed by public input. This will be obtained through the five Community Visioning Sessions and through the Stakeholder Committee meeting that will occur in May and June. The draft EMP will be available in September and it will be made available for further public comment prior to finalization. The draft EMP will be submitted to the Environment Committee for review and input, prior to being released for public comment.

On this basis, it is recommended that the recommendations contained in this report be approved.

Attachments

1. Environment Committee/Staff Workshop Report – May 1, 2008: DPRA Inc.

Report Prepared by:

Roy McQuillin, Manager of Corporate Policy, ext. 8211

Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

ATTACHMENT NO. 1

Environmental Master Plan Draft Definitions



Background:

On May 1, 2008, members of the Environment Committee and staff in Vaughan met to discuss a draft series of definitions to support the City's first Environmental Master Plan.¹

The definitions of sustainability, an environmental ethic and a series of principles will guide the implementation of the Environmental Master Plan.

The workshop resulted in two sets of recommendations for the definitions. These are presented for discussion purposes.

Recommended Next Steps:

- Input from the public-at-large on the underlying sustainability issues be obtained during the Community Visioning Workshops and during the Stakeholder Committee meeting (May and June, 2008).

Draft Definitions:

In Vaughan we recognize that sustainability is a shared responsibility among all levels of government, our residents and businesses. At the municipal level, we are committed to implementing our Environmental Master Plan by applying the lens of sustainability to our operational and regulatory functions. We are guided by the following definition:

Group One:

Sustainability means making choices that do not deprive our children and grandchildren of their hopes for a healthy future.

Group Two:

Sustainability First

Sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations.

¹ Detailed notes of the workshop begin on page 3.

In our pursuit of sustainability, we will be guided by the following ethic:

Group One:

In Vaughan we lead by examples as responsible stewards of our community. Our decisions entail determining first the impact of our actions on the environment; secondly weighing the social/cultural consequences; and thirdly understanding any financial implications. Our actions will enhance both the natural and built environments.

Group Two:

Recommendation to eliminate the ethic; the group felt it was unnecessary.

The following principles will guide our actions:

Group One:

In pursuit of sustainability as we make our choices and take our actions, we are guided by the following principles:

- We will maintain our current level of natural capital and commit to increasing our natural wealth.
- We commit to reduce our consumption of resources by emphasizing conservation.
- We will decrease emissions and effluents through the use of sustainable clean technology.
- We will establish communities that promote health and well being through planning, infrastructure and programs.
- We will seek the advice and opinion of our residents, businesses and partners on significant policies, plans and programs.
- We will act as an advocate on matters beyond our control to ensure a sustainable future for Vaughan.
- We will act responsibly; our choices and actions will not create an unfair burden for the future of Vaughan.

Group Two:

Principles based on some of the Corporate Values in Vaughan Vision 2020, with a distinct definition specific to the Environmental Master Plan.

- LEADERSHIP:** We act as advocates for a sustainable future and support positive initiatives emerging from all sectors of society.
- INNOVATION:** We build upon best practices to create "Made in Vaughan" solutions to guide our operations and shape our plans and policies.
- TRANSPARENCY:** Our actions are clear and traceable; we monitor and report on our progress.
- ACCOUNTABILITY:** We take responsibility for our actions and we learn from the past.
- RESPONSIBILITY:** All in Vaughan have a role to play in the implementation of the plan.
- ENGAGEMENT:** We actively involve our residents and partners in decision-making.

Workshop Notes

Date: May 1, 2008

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: Public Hearing Room, Vaughan Civic Centre

Attendees: Councillor Alan Shefman, Bill Robinson, Clayton Harris, Diana Birchall, Duncan MacAskill, Janice Atwood-Petkovski, Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, Margie Singleton, Marjie Fraser, Regional Councillor Mario Ferri, Marlon Kallideen, Paul Gardner, Paul Robinson, Rebekah McGurran, Shirley Kam, Councillor Tony Carella, Tony Iacobelli, and Wayne McEachern.

Facilitators: Amanda Kennedy and Jim Micak, DPRA

Recorder: Susan Robinson, DPRA

Notes:

Introduction

- Regional Councillor Frustaglio commenced the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and introduced purpose of meeting
 - To review a series of draft definitions to support the Environmental Master Plan
- Jim Micak referred to Monday's meeting of the Environment Committee, noting that we would build upon the comments from that session to develop a definition, ethic and principles for public comment. Today was not the final decision-making session, it is meant to be a brainstorming session.
- DPRA circulated the following hand-outs:
 - Agenda
 - Draft definition of sustainability, ethic and principles
 - Examples of definitions from other communities

Environmental Master Plan Process and Product

- Amanda Kennedy gave a brief overview presentation about:
 - The intent of the Environmental Master Plan (EMP)
 - The process to develop the EMP
 - The timelines associated with the process
 - How we got to the draft definitions
 - Next steps

Lead in to Small Group Discussions

- Jim noted that on Monday there was an indication of preference for more edginess in the definitions. He circulated a revised draft ethic, an alternate version; he tried to stay true to the definitions on Monday, but presented them in a different way.
- The group was asked to come up with their own definition of sustainability; they could tweak this one, or come up with something different.
- Councillor Shefman offered a Wikipedia definition to add to the discussion; copies were circulated.
- Two groups were formed: each group had two commissioners, two councilors and an even distribution of directors and staff.
- Jim facilitated one group and Amanda facilitated the other

Small Group Discussions

- The two groups worked to each develop:
 - A definition of sustainability
 - An ethic
 - A series of principles

- *Flipchart notes from each of the groups are included on the following pages*

Large Group Discussion

After one hour of working independently, the groups reported back. Councillor Carella reported for Jim's group. Councillor Shefman reported for Group Two; he explained that we need to build on the evolving understanding of sustainability, and the group wanted something inspirational and edgy.

These definitions are included on pages one and two of this memo.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm

Appendix A - Group One's Notes

Facilitated by Jim Micak

Participants Included: Bill Robinson, Clayton Harris, Duncan MacAskill, Margie Singleton, Marjie Fraser, Regional Councillor Mario Ferri, Paul Gardner, Paul Robinson, Rebekah McGurran, Councillor Tony Carella, and Wayne McEachern.

Sustainability

Characteristics

- next generations, children, grandchildren, healthy (as opposed to dying)
- balance, proactive, responsible
- borrowing from the next generation, do not harm, tread lightly
- neutralize impact, respect, collaboration
- retention of what we have, conserve, well-being
- a way of thinking that is automatic, live and breathe it, second-nature
- setting an example, having a global perspective that Vaughan is part of a much larger whole
- restore, rehabilitate
- symbiotic relationship, interrelated, any imbalance will cause our demise
- sustainability isn't just about the environment- social, economic infrastructure, Oakville's definition just talks about quality of life and environmental, what were doing is pushing the edges of the envelope. It's a broad plan, sustainability is bigger than the environment
- leadership by example, inward examination and then education outward to the public
- indefinite, continuous
- standards, measurable

Possible Definitions

- Vaughan is putting sustainability first. We are committed to actions and choices that balance ecological health, vibrant communities and ensure economic prosperity.
- In Vaughan, sustainability means that we will ensure that all decisions and actions reflect our commitment to sustainable solutions, in recognition of our responsibility to current and future generations of Vaughan and the World.
- Respecting the need to balance the social, financial and environmental cornerstones of our community, the city of Vaughan will be proactive in the pursuit of sustainability excellence to ensure our actions today enhance the quality of life for our future.
- In Vaughan, sustainability means taking actions that enhance our community quality of life.
- In Vaughan we are committed to sustainable choices. Our choices balance: preservation of our ecological heritage, enhancement of our healthy communities, and commitment to fiscal responsibility. Our choices must recognize our obligations to future generations.
- Sustainability means living our lives in a way that does not amount to robbing our children and grandchildren of their hope of survival.
- the West Water Australia and add "while striving to enhance our quality of life and protect our environment"
- Vaughan the city of choice. Where people enjoy clean air, safe water, green land, and where businesses prefer to invest.
- In Vaughan sustainability means that we act responsible by making decisions that enhance the community's quality of life. We achieve this by protecting the environment in all aspects of social, cultural and economic endeavors.

Final Working Definition

Sustainability means making choices that do not deprive our children and grandchildren of their hopes for a healthy future.

Environmental Ethic

- In Vaughan we lead by examples as responsible stewards of our community. Our decisions entail determining first the impact of our actions on the environment; secondly weighing the social/cultural consequences; and thirdly understanding any financial implications. Our actions will enhance both the natural and built environments.
- The ethic is followed by a combination of the principles and draft ethic (handed out today)
- Need to revise “establish communities...” (Paul to collaborate with DPRA)
- Add:
 - rehabilitate and restore
 - awareness, educate and inform

Appendix B- Group Two's Notes

Facilitated by Amanda Kennedy

Participants Included; Councillor Alan Shefman, Diana Birchall, Janice Atwood-Petkovski, Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, Marlon Kallideen, Shirley Kam, and Tony Iacobelli.

Sustainability

Checklist

- Tone - formal vs. conversational
- Need for ‘understandability’
- Emphasis?
- Short
- Inspirational
- Punchy

Characteristics

- Today's growth must not be achieved at tomorrow's expense
- Making the right decisions today to invest in a better future.
- Live lightly
- Preserve ad. ntl spaces
- Fiscal decisions - long term consideration
- Reversing what we're doing- not implied (principles), destruction so far
- Tie in sustainability in reports
- Definition should enable decision-makers to make the right decision.
- Environment, Economy, Community → inter-relationship
- Build on what's understood
- For everyone - all need to participate
- Tell us what we will do - not ‘respect’/ ‘commitment’
- Use firm language
- Vaughan as part of larger system- earth
- Policies will have long term positive effects
- Show leadership/buy-in by residents
- We don't get to sit idly by while others act (principles)

Possible Definitions

Sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that balance the environmental, social, cultural and economic needs of current and future generations

Sustainability is about living and working in ways that protect and build our future social, environmental and economic wealth.

To be sustainable, we must understand how systems interact and make sure our activities do not compromise the ability of any of the systems to function currently and into the future.

Final Working Definition

Sustainability First

Sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations.

Environmental Ethic

Recommendation: Remove ethic and go to guiding principles

To Add to Principles:

- Understanding of 3 elements
- Remove a few or shorten definitions
- Concise
- Keep in: transparency, leadership (shorter version), accountability, innovation
- Active participation of residents/ engagement
- Triple bottom line
- All have a role to play
- Add:
 - Responsibility - Everyone bears....
 - Engagement