



**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

**Table of Contents**

<b><u>Minute No.</u></b>		<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
162.	CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA .....	211
163.	DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST .....	211
164.	REPORT ON THE AUGUST 20 <sup>TH</sup> , 2009 TORNADO ACCOMPANIED BY A SEVERE STORM (Item 31, Report No. 38, Committee of the Whole).....	211
165.	CONFIRMING BY-LAW .....	218
166.	ADJOURNMENT.....	218



**CITY OF VAUGHAN**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

**MINUTES**

**±11:30 A.M.**

Council convened in the Municipal Council Chambers in Vaughan, Ontario, at 12:20 p.m.

The following members were present:

Mayor Linda D. Jackson, Chair  
Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio  
Regional Councillor Mario F. Ferri  
Councillor Tony Carella  
Councillor Bernie Di Vona  
Councillor Peter Meffe  
Councillor Alan Shefman  
Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco

**162. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

MOVED by Regional Councillor Ferri  
seconded by Councillor Yeung Racco

THAT the agenda be confirmed.

CARRIED

**163. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

There was no disclosure of interest by any member.

**164. REPORT ON THE AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 TORNADO  
ACCOMPANIED BY A SEVERE STORM**

(Item 31, Report No. 38, Committee of the Whole)

MOVED by Regional Councillor Ferri  
seconded by Councillor Meffe

- 1) That Clauses 1 and 3 of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager and the Fire Chief, dated September 8, 2009, be approved; and
- 2) That the following Resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS the City of Vaughan recently experienced a severe storm and tornado on August 20, 2009;

AND WHEREAS based on the extent of the devastation the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated;

AND WHEREAS the Head of Council declared an Emergency in the City of Vaughan;

## **SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

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AND WHEREAS substantial damages were incurred;

AND WHEREAS the municipality wishes to make application for assistance from Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Vaughan resolves as follows:

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Vaughan hereby requests the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to declare the area bounded by Highway #27 on the west, Highway #7 on the south, Keele Street on the east, Kirby Road on the north to Highway #400, and Major Mackenzie Drive from Highway #400 to Highway #27 a Disaster Area for the purposes of both the public damage and private damage components of the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP);

And should the Minister declare the above area a Disaster Area, Council will immediately, under the authority of ODRAP, appoint members to a Disaster Relief Committee to administer ODRAP, as required.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY UPON A RECORDED VOTE

YEAS

NAYS

Mayor Jackson  
Councillor Yeung Racco  
Councillor Meffe  
Regional Councillor Ferri  
Councillor Shefman  
Regional Councillor Frustaglio  
Councillor DiVona  
Councillor Carella

**Recommendation**

The City Manager and the Fire Chief in consultation with the Senior Management Team, the Director of Financial Services and the Director of Legal Services recommends:

1. That the presentation be received,
2. That the Committee adopt the Resolution in Attachment 1; and
3. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute any necessary documentation for the ODRAP application(s).

**Contribution to Sustainability**

Through an assessment of the City's response to the emergency and up-to-dating the Emergency Plan as appropriate, the Emergency Operations Centre and the City of Vaughan will be able to manage future emergencies.

**Economic Impact**

On August 20, 2009 a tornado touched down in the City of Vaughan causing significant damage to public and private property. The City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated. The impact of the storm and the emergency response were unplanned events and therefore there was no provision for these costs.

The municipality has 14 days from the date of the storm to request financial assistance from the Province. To meet this timeline, staff from the City of Vaughan and our emergency partners have

been collecting cost information. At this point in time, the cost to respond to the emergency and infrastructure damage to public property is estimated at \$730,000. In order to access funding under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP), Council must pass a resolution asking the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to assess and declare a Disaster Area in Vaughan. Further, Council would have to establish a Disaster Relief Committee to raise funds for the benefit of disaster victims and to administer and settle the eligible claims of these victims as efficiently as possible.

### **Communications Plan**

In addition to the significant communication that has taken place to date, Corporate Communications will arrange for press releases in order to communicate Council's decision.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview regarding the impact of the tornado, the initial response, the handling of the emergency, the action taken to recover from the emergency, the costs associated with the emergency, and to request assistance from the Province through the ODRAP.

### **Background - Analysis and Options**

#### **The Tornado**

On Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at approximately 5:30 pm, a thunderstorm started to pass through Vaughan travelling in an easterly direction. Shortly after 6:00 pm, a tornado touched down in the area of Martin Grove Road and Highway # 7. The attached map (Attachment 2) shows the general travel path of the tornado in a north easterly direction from Martin Grove Road and Highway #7 to the Teston Road/Jane Street area. The first damage was to cars in the parking lot of the No Frills store at the corner of Martin Grove Road and Highway # 7. Cars were overturned and thrown about the parking lot. The tornado next touched down on Button Road, Marilyn Place, Andrew Park Drive and North Humber Drive. Roofs were torn off several houses in this area and St. Peter's Catholic School was severely damaged. The tornado touched down next on Houston Road and Moonstone Place where it tore the roofs off of numerous homes. Some of the homes were so badly damaged that they later had to be demolished. The tornado continued to move in a north easterly direction including Davidson Drive, Lloyd Street, Waymar Heights Boulevard, and Gamble Street. Damage included broken windows, damaged roofs, and uprooted trees. Although heavily damaged, this area sustained less damage than the other sites. The final touch down was in the Jane Street and Cunningham Drive area. The tornado initially touched down on the west side of Jane Street, causing damage to roofs and felling trees on Sail Crescent, Tierra Avenue, Equator Crescent, and Naples Avenue. The tornado then touched down with great force east of Jane Street, ripping roofs off houses and collapsing garages on Haymer Avenue and Burnhaven Avenue. The tornado then whipped the debris from Haymer Avenue and Burnhaven Avenue into homes on Fairmont Avenue, Delfire Crescent, Melville Avenue, and Sierra Court. The flying debris caused damage to the exposed homes in the path of the tornado and broke windows and caused puncture damage in walls and roofs.

In all, 45 homes were damaged to the point that they were declared unsafe by the City of Vaughan Building Standards Department. After further inspection, that number was later reduced to 38. Another 619 homes are located in the areas where the tornado touched down, which may have received less severe damage. In addition to the private property damaged and damage to municipal property, the tornado downed power lines, including a series of hydro poles on Teston Road. In total, 47,862 PowerStream customers in Vaughan experienced power outages. Miraculously, there were only minor personal injuries related to the tornado and no fatalities.

On Friday, August 21, 2009, Environment Canada determined that a category "F2" tornado had touched down in Vaughan.

### The Response

The VFRS received the first call for help related to the tornado at 6:11 pm. Because the damage was localized to four areas in Vaughan, the VFRS was able to develop four site commands to work with York Regional Police, PowerStream, Enbridge Gas, Building Standards Department and Public Works in order to address the emergencies at each site. The emergency response teams searched all of the damaged homes and isolated hazards by shutting off gas and hydro to damaged homes. Residents were also evacuated to safe areas. Because of the demand imposed on VFRS resources by the tornado, on duty staff had to be supplemented with overtime crews and mutual aid assistance from King Township, Richmond Hill, and Markham.

### The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

The Fire Chief initiated activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at 6:45 pm because of the magnitude of the emergency caused by the tornado. The Emergency Management Team (EMT) notification was commenced at 6:53 pm and the EOC was fully operational by 8:00 pm. The first business cycle meeting occurred at 8:30 pm and, as a result of the EMT gathering information from the staff at the four incident sites, the Head of Council declared an emergency at 9:38 pm. The EOC quickly activated emergency evacuation centres for Woodbridge residents at Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre and for Maple residents at the Maple Community Centre. The EOC activated the Red Cross to assist with the staffing of the evacuation centres. The EOC was able to effectively coordinate the response to the emergency as well as provide the necessary logistical support required in the field. Activation of the EOC allowed the City of Vaughan to control and coordinate all aspects of the emergency including logistics, response, and communications with the public through the media. To ensure a coordinated response, the EOC included the City's emergency partners, York Regional Police, Emergency Measures Ontario, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and PowerStream.

The EOC was fully staffed for the first 24 hours of the emergency and remained open and active for the entire week even after the emergency was officially terminated at 6:00 pm on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Nine Business Cycle meetings were completed during the operation of the EOC.

### The Recovery

The initial hazards associated with the tornado were mitigated by approximately 1:00 am on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and the EOC began to focus on the recovery phase of the operations.

The VFRS continued to maintain a presence at Sites 1, 2 and 4 to ensure the safety of residents and workers now on site to commence repair work. The York Regional Police maintained security at the affected streets until August 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the streets were safe for traffic and the damaged homes were secured. The police also provided investigative services as required.

Two emergency shelters were established; one in the Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre and one in the Maple Community Centre. City staff was supported by staff from the Canadian Red Cross and York Region. In addition, the Insurance Bureau of Canada was set up to assist residents with insurance related matters.

The Public Works Department focused on maintaining water, sewage and road systems that may have been impacted by the storm. Due to the power outage in Maple, the Works Department had to intervene to ensure that adequate water was available using the Maplewood booster station. Catch basin lids and streets had to be cleared of debris and the sewage lift stations had to remain operational. Street sweepers were used to clean all of the affected streets. Crews also collected garbage and debris from the affected sites throughout the weekend.

Parks and Forestry Operations Department assisted by the MNR, Town of Markham, York Region, Town of Richmond Hill and the TRCA inspected and removed hazardous trees, removed branches and brush, and coordinated the clean-up activity in parks and open space. Assistance from Parks and Forestry Operations was provided to Public Works for debris removal along roadsides immediately after the tornado and staff assisted with the closure of an evacuation centre. Staff in the

## SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 8, 2009

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department continues to work with residents and Public Works to remove tree branches that are being left at the curb.

The Building Standards Department inspected all of the damaged homes on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and issued orders for those homes too badly damaged to occupy. Building Inspectors were also present on the affected streets on the weekend in order to answer any questions the residents might have.

PowerStream, with the assistance of external contractors, worked continuously to restore power and replace a series of broken power line poles.

Access Vaughan extended their hours into the evening and the weekend to respond to calls and provide assistance to residents. Information was available regarding general inquiries, shelters, how to request property tax relief, the information survey distributed by the City. Other specific calls were directed to the appropriate departments.

During the entire emergency and for several days following the official termination of the emergency status, communications was critical to relay information to the public and to ensure a sense of calm in the community. Corporate Communications worked closely with the EOC and the Mayor to coordinate messaging.

### **Estimated Costs to Respond to the Emergency and Property Damage Costs**

As a result of the August 20, 2009 tornado, the City of Vaughan, York Region, and the local electrical distribution company (PowerStream) incurred significant costs to respond to the emergency and in terms of the damage public property. In addition to the public cost, there was also extensive damage to private property.

The following paragraphs provide estimates of the costs to respond to the severe storm/tornado and the damage to private and municipal property. In some instances, information is not yet available.

#### Municipal Cost Estimates

The following is the total estimated costs for the response and recovery as a result of the severe storm/tornado. The costs are based on estimates at this point in time. The total includes all staff time including management, union, contractor costs, vehicle, equipment and costs related to York Region's response including police, social services and PowerStream costs.

#### August 20, 2009 Tornado Municipal Cost Estimates

	Responding to the Emergency	Infrastructure	Total
Emergency Operation Centre	\$59,173		\$59,173
Building Standards	18,387		18,387
Fire and Rescue	51,641		51,641
Public Works	66,860	47,557	114,417
Forestry	41,689	60,960	102,649
Enforcement	36,637		36,637
Building & Facilities	18,240		18,240
Other Costs	2,606		2,606
City Total	<u>\$295,233</u>	<u>\$108,517</u>	<u>\$403,750</u>
York Region Costs	\$106,000	\$39,000	\$145,000

PowerStream Inc.	180,000		180,000
Total Estimated Costs	<u>\$581,233</u>	<u>\$147,517</u>	<u>\$728,750</u>

**Private Property Cost Estimates**

Shortly after the tornado, the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) had representation at the two (2) designated community centre shelters to assist property owners. At this point in time the IBC is unable to provide any data with respect to the number of claims or an estimate of the damage to private property. In an attempt to gather data, the City of Vaughan in consultation with staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing distributed surveys to the areas most impacted by the tornado. The survey was hand delivered on Friday, August 28, 2009 to the homes for the purpose of assessing the extent of uninsured losses. The survey was also available at the two designated community centres, Access Vaughan and on the City's website. To meet the ODRAP application deadline, the surveys were due back Wednesday, September 2, 2009.

As of September 3, 2009, the City received 178 surveys from residents/tenants or approximately a 13% response rate. Staff reviewed these survey results and 96 residents indicated that they had insurance, 34 residents indicated they do not have insurance, however, some of these relate to the deductible portion of their policy, 37 residents stated that they were not sure, some of these 37 residents indicated that their insurance company had not yet responded and 11 indicated that there was no damage. Some of the damage indicated on surveys includes damaged roofs, chimneys, windows, fences, patio furniture, recreational vehicles, gazebos, etc.

In addition to the surveys, staff reviewed the assessment records for those properties which were posted as uninhabitable. These properties had severe damage and the full extent of the work required to restore these homes is unknown at this time. However the assessed value of these structures (excluding land and contents) is \$17M based on the 2008 assessment.

In the absence of additional information from the IBC or other sources, the City is unable to further quantify the uninsurable loss to those properties posted as uninhabitable and the numerous other private properties that were damaged.

**Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program**

The Provincial government provides funding for disaster relief for natural disasters under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program which is administered under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Provincial Guidelines are provided under Attachment 3. This program provides assistance for both the public (municipal) cost side and to private homeowners and businesses. The financial assistance is based generally on the magnitude and duration of the disaster, the extent of damage, the municipality's and community's financial capacity to recover.

A municipality must submit a resolution requesting the Minister to declare the affected area a disaster area within 14 days from the date of the declared emergency. The resolution must state the type of disaster, the date, clearly define the area which may be declared a disaster area and must outline whether it is seeking public or private or both components.

**Resolution Municipal Costs**

A municipality must submit a damage report indicating preliminary cost estimates relating to the response and recovery from the disaster. These costs include restoration costs, clean-up costs to ensure public safety, emergency operation costs, supplies, vehicle and equipment costs, shelters of people, food, water, staff overtime.



#### Resolution Private Costs

If Council includes the private costs in the disaster resolution and the Minister declares a disaster then Council must immediately appoint members to a Disaster Relief Committee. The relief committee and any sub committee will then be responsible for the raising of funds, receipt of funds and the administration and the settlement of eligible claims of the disaster victims. Financial assistance under ODRAP for private claims is up to \$2 for every dollar raised locally by the disaster relief committee.

This program is not an alternative to private insurance coverage. Ineligible losses under this program include losses covered by insurance, insurance deductible or non essential items such as landscaping, fences, recreational items, etc.

#### Canadian Red Cross

During the emergency Canadian Red Cross in conjunction with York Region Social Services were present in the shelters to provide information and referral services to assist those residents impacted by the tornado. A number of residents attended and some registered with the Red Cross. During the emergency the Canadian Red Cross initiated a fund raising campaign to assist those in need. It is our understanding that limited donations have been received at this point, and that some funds and services have been provided to families. York Region Social Services have indicated that they will be assisting the Red Cross on-site up to September 12, 2009.

It should be noted that if the private side of the resolution is approved by the Minister, the Canadian Red Cross would cease its fundraising activities. The Canadian Red Cross would not want to compete with the Disaster Relief Committee's fundraising activities. It has been indicated that the Canadian Red Cross, if available, would assist the Disaster Relief Committee in Relief efforts.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness

Facilitate the implementation of an emergency management program to comply with the Emergency Planning Act.

#### **Regional Implications**

Regional resources including York Regional Police, York EMS, Region of York Emergency Planning, Health Services and Social Services contributed to the response and recovery to the tornado.

#### **Conclusion**

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 a tornado accompanied by a severe storm touched down in the City of Vaughan and caused millions of dollars worth of damage to property and left a number of residents homeless. As a result, the City activated its Emergency Plan and opened the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). Once the EOC was operational and could assess the amount of damage, the decision was made to declare an emergency. The EOC includes the City's emergency partners, the Region of York, PowerStream, Emergency Management Ontario and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Once the City declared an emergency, it became eligible to apply under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program. In order to access ODRAP, Council must pass a resolution asking the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to assess the damage and declare the areas damaged by the tornado as Disaster Areas. The request must identify both the public and private components of the funding request. In addition to the request to the Minister, Council would have to establish a Disaster Relief Committee to raise funds for the benefit of disaster victims and to settle the eligible claims of these victims as efficiently as possible.

The feedback from the community and other stakeholders has been very supportive and complementary as to the immediacy and overall response to the emergency. This is to a large part

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 8, 2009**

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directly attributable to the extensive emergency management training that has taken place and the commitment and dedication of the City of Vaughan staff and that of our emergency partners.

**Attachments**

1. Resolution
2. Map of the affected area
3. Provincial Guidelines

**Report prepared by:**

Deputy Fire Chief L. Bentley  
Deputy Fire Chief G. Duncan  
Director of Finance Barry Jackson

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

**165. CONFIRMING BY-LAW**

MOVED by Councillor Carella  
seconded by Councillor Shefman

THAT By-law Number 189-2009, being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of Council at its meeting on September 8, 2009, be read a First, Second and Third time and enacted.

CARRIED

**166. ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Councillor Meffe  
seconded by Regional Councillor Ferri

THAT the meeting adjourn at 12:24 p.m.

CARRIED

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Linda D. Jackson, Mayor

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Jeffrey A. Abrams, City Clerk