



**THE WEST WOODBRIDGE
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.**
"Informed citizens organized for constructive action!"



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Communication
CW: Feb 25/14
Item: 15

February 25, 2014

SENT VIA EMAIL

TO: City of Vaughan
c/o Jeffrey Abrams, City Clerk
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

AND: Members of Council

RE: Committee of the Whole Report No. 10 - Item #15
Registered Ratepayer/Community Association Policy Review

Honourable Mayor and Members of Council,

When communities such as ours have been faced with the threat of incompatible redevelopment or with local but nevertheless important neighbourhood problems, the residents have frequently banded together to establish a ratepayer association. These organizations have provided an effective method of expressing community concerns.

Over the years Vaughan has been well served by its ratepayer organizations. But usually they are established because of a particular local issue. Once the issue disappears the association often disappears also.

The WWHHA was established approximately 40 years ago by residents of west Woodbridge to fight an asphalt plant. In the late 1980's we became incorporated as a non-profit organization.

The WWHHA, Inc. started off as a small association but over the years expanded and we are still going strong. We have expanded because we provide our members and residents an organized and effective method of expressing their concerns about many different neighbourhood problems.

We have been very active and in good standing both with the City of Vaughan and provincial legislation that governs non-profit organizations for many years, providing a vehicle for residents to express community concerns about many different neighbourhood problems.

The WWHHA disagrees with the report submitted by the Ratepayer Policy Review Group.

We feel that this group was set up under false pretenses, especially by calling themselves a "taskforce"; which they clearly were not! Council provided clear and concise instructions and calling the group a "taskforce" as per the City of Vaughan Procedural Orders was not one of them.

The processes used by the group were flawed from the beginning!

An important goal for the group directed by Council was to provide additional input from all interested parties. Even though some of the ratepayers associations expressed an interest to not participate in the scheduled meetings they should have been provided the opportunity to provide comments and/or suggestions on the final document prior to submission to the City Clerk. This would have provided a report that truly represented all registered and unregistered ratepayer associations across the City of Vaughan. It's the way to work collectively and productively. Having it on today's committee's agenda is not enough! Instead the meetings felt very much as an "us and them" approach. Us being the unregistered ratepayers association and them being the registered ratepayers associations. As a consequence there was zero consensus from all interested parties and many ceased to attend meetings.

The process did not allow representatives of ratepayers associations the ability to take the final recommendations to their board of executives for review and consensus.

As for the recommendation to have a minimum number of members within a planning block or within a pre-defined community of a ratepayers can only be seen as an undemocratic effort to restrict residents from belonging to a ratepayers association of their choice. Just like City of Vaughan Council - all ratepayer associations operate on democratic principles and processes and their boards are accountable to its members and residents. It is highly undemocratic to try to control a ratepayer's association's memberships in this manner.

Furthermore, we need to bear in mind privacy issues in regards to the disclosure of ratepayer's associations' members' information. Our experience with our members is that most prefer that we do not share their personal information with any third-party. We explain to our members that their membership status will be provided to the city for the sole purpose of maintaining our registration with the city and we give them the ability to opt-out of providing their information to the city. We are committed to protecting the privacy of our members, volunteers and other stakeholders and we recognize that maintaining this trust requires us to be transparent and accountable in maintaining the confidentiality of the personal information that our members choose to share with us. We value the trust of those we deal with and of the public.

In summary, Ratepayers associations provide a vehicle for residents to voice their concerns; as residents our collective funding contributes and supports the operation of the Corporation of the City of Vaughan. We as citizens are the shareholders of the corporation. All organizations require checks and balances in order to operate smoothly. One can't be effective without the other.

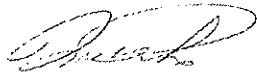
We strongly believe that we live in a fine city. The men and women of our ratepayer organizations who have maintained good standing with the city for the many years have helped to make it and keep it that way.

Also, we strongly believe that there is no justification for the city to revise their current registered ratepayer/community association policy. The current policy was established in 1986 with minor revisions throughout the years and it has served the city and ratepayer associations well. There is a saying "If it isn't broke, don't fix it"!

We respectfully reserve the right to provide further comments and recommendations in the future and/or at the future Committee of Whole (Working Session). We also agree with the group's request for Council to consider any future meetings to allow for further consultation and discussion to be held in the evening.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully yours,



Nick Pinto

President

The West Woodbridge Homeowners Association Inc.