



September 29, 2008

Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk,
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
P.O. Box 147
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Sent via email
denis.kelly@york.ca

Dear Mr. Kelly:

At Authority Meeting #7/08, of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), held on September 19, 2008, Resolution #A202/08, in regard to York Region Discussion Paper: Best Practices for New Communities was approved as follows:

THAT York Region be commended for preparing the discussion paper Best Practices for New Communities;

THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff be directed to assist and support York Region in the implementation of these and other best practices for sustainable community development and to address issues such as barriers to implementation, training needs and incentives;

THAT TRCA staff be directed to participate in the follow-up New Communities Symposium and Charrette;

THAT TRCA encourage York Region to research and implement best practices from other advanced jurisdictions, such as European communities;

THAT TRCA programs and studies, such as watershed plans, the Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP) and the Archetype Sustainable House be used to inform best practices in York Region in the areas of natural heritage systems, green buildings, stormwater management, and alternative energy and energy conservation;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff be directed to promote the use of best practices in not just new communities, but in the redevelopment of existing communities as well.

Enclosed for your information and any action deemed necessary is the report as presented to the Authority. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the undersigned at 416-661-6600 extension 5264 (kstranks@trca.on.ca) or David Burnett at extension 5361.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kathy Stranks".

Kathy Stranks
Manager, Chair and CAO's Office

cc. David Burnett, Manager, Provincial and Regional Policy, TRCA

/Encl.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Bryan Tuckey, Commissioner, Planning and Development Services, York Region
Denis Kelly, Region Clerk, York Region

Item 7.3

TO: Chair and Members of the Authority
Meeting #7/08, September 19, 2008

FROM: Carolyn Woodland, Director, Planning and Development

RE: **YORK REGION DISCUSSION PAPER: BEST PRACTICES FOR NEW COMMUNITIES**

KEY ISSUE

Providing comments on York Region's discussion paper "Best Practices for New Communities".

RECOMMENDATION

THAT York Region be commended for preparing the discussion paper Best Practices for New Communities;

THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff be directed to assist and support York Region in the implementation of these and other best practices for sustainable community development and to address issues such as barriers to implementation, training needs and incentives;

THAT TRCA staff be directed to participate in the follow-up New Communities Symposium and Charrette;

THAT TRCA encourage York Region to research and implement best practices from other advanced jurisdictions, such as European communities;

THAT TRCA programs and studies, such as watershed plans, the Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP) and the Archetype Sustainable House be used to inform best practices in York Region in the areas of natural heritage systems, green buildings, stormwater management, and alternative energy and energy conservation;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff be directed to promote the use of best practices in not just new communities, but in the redevelopment of existing communities as well.

BACKGROUND

Comments and Opportunities for Collaboration

The document contains many practices that TRCA is promoting. Overall, the directions in this paper and York Region's initiative are consistent with the major overall recommendations arising from the Humber, Rouge and Don watershed plans. This will assist in and support the watershed plans' implementation in the areas of enhanced natural heritage system, water management recommendations for lot level stormwater management and rain harvesting, and energy conservation, among others. Staff provide the following observations and comments on the report:

- Goals for sustainable communities need to be clearly articulated in order to establish measurable performance objectives, desired outcomes and criteria against which to evaluate the success of the best management practices (BMPs) in meeting the community goals.
- The addition of a reference to watershed plans as contributing to the formulation of science-based environmental targets to guide sustainable community design would be appropriate.
- Other areas of the world, notably Europe, are far more advanced in their use of best practices and these also should be evaluated for use in York Region.
- Further attention needs to be directed toward developing and promoting landscape or "nature-based" best practices and low impact design to complement the building/technology focused BMPs.
- TRCA cautions against the entrenchment of specific BMPs in the official plan as, by their very nature, BMPs can become outdated and replaced with better management practices.
- The BMP case studies would benefit from an analysis as to how successful they have been in meeting the desired objectives, or what the shortcomings might be.
- While the Stormwater Source Control BMP from Vancouver is a good example, TRCA's new Water Management Guideline (currently draft) is a local example developed specifically for Greater Toronto Area (GTA) communities.
- The Archetype Sustainable House, currently under construction at The Living City Campus at Kortright in Vaughan should also be highlighted as a BMP demonstration project for residential housing in the green building section;
- TRCA's Sustainable Technology Evaluation Program (STEP), of which York Region is a funding partner, could also be shown as a BMP under a more broadly defined section on Measuring and Reporting;

Key to the success of building sustainable new communities will be the implementation of these and other best management practices. It has been TRCA's experience that many recent development applications are full of promise for being more sustainable and implementing many of these BMPs. However, as time goes by and costs are tabulated, these BMPs and innovative sustainable elements of the plans are the first items to be dropped, resulting in a "business as usual" development. TRCA and York Region need to work collaboratively to ensure the promise of sustainable community development is fulfilled. The translation of goals into practical community design processes and site plan review need to be explored in an integrated municipal department and agency approach. Discussions need to occur to understand barriers to implementation, training needs for both agency and development industry staffs, and the need for incentives to encourage the desired outcomes.

Report prepared by: David Burnett, extension 5361
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Date: September 09, 2008