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JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends:

- 1. the communication from Sheila Birrell, Town Clerk, Town of Markham, February 28, 2007, regarding Justices of the Peace for Central East Region, be received; and**
- 2. the following resolution prepared by Regional staff be recommended for approval:**

WHEREAS on March 31, 2005 Regional Council adopted a Resolution requesting the immediate appointment of eleven new Justices of the Peace for the Central East Region, and that further appointments be made promptly in the future to reflect the demand for judicial resources;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of the Attorney General has appointed seventy-four Justices of the Peace across Ontario since 2003, approximately only fifty-five of those appointments have been new, full-time presiding positions and only three appointments have been made to York Region;

AND WHEREAS Regional staff estimate that York Region requires twenty full-time presiding Justices of the Peace to adequately staff the existing ten courtrooms and the telewarrant centre yet there are currently only sixteen actively presiding Justices of the Peace in York Region, including one new appointment announced on March 11, 2007;

AND WHEREAS the lack of adequate judicial resources continues to cause unplanned closures of the Provincial Offences Courts in York Region and the loss of 1,398 hours of court time in 2006;

AND WHEREAS the unplanned court closures in 2006 resulted in the withdrawal of over 7,500 Part I *Provincial Offences Act* charges, the majority of which were charges laid pursuant to the *Highway Traffic Act*, many of which were for serious driving offences;

AND WHEREAS the closure of courts and the withdrawal of charges due to inadequate judicial resources results in inconvenience to the public, undermines law enforcement activities, and creates a potential loss of public confidence in the integrity of the administration of justice;

AND WHEREAS York Region requires the immediate appointment of at least four new, full-time presiding Justices of the Peace, in addition to replacements for vacancies created by attrition;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible to superintend all matters connected with the administration of justice and the administration of the courts, and as such is responsible for the provision of judicial resources necessary for the proper administration of courts to protect the integrity of the administration of justice;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that Regional Council hereby requests the immediate appointment of four new, full-time presiding Justices of the Peace to preside in the Region's Provincial Offences Courts in addition to the sixteen Justices of the Peace currently presiding;

AND FURTHER that the Ministry of the Attorney General fully consult with the Region as a court administrator prior to the final determination of the Justice of Peace complement to be approved for York Region.