

**Submission by Toomas Karmo
for Town of Richmond Hill
Council Meeting of 2017-11-13,
for Inclusion in the Public Record**

The Town has kindly gone to trouble in advising me, in a preliminary way verbally on the evening of 2017-11-06, and then formally in an e-mail of 2017-11-07, that a revised version of SREIS 17.021 will be submitted to the next meeting of the DDO Park Project steering committee, early in 2018. I hope to report back to Council, either in Public Forum or as a Delegation, once that submission has been made by Commissioner Italo Brutto's team.

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At this present 2017-11-13 meeting of Council, I must not so much repeat myself (by underscoring, as I just have, the importance of getting SREIS.17.021 right), but to put onto the public record my concerns regarding a possible malign future path for DDO. I would urge both Town and taxpayers to maintain vigilance in the face of some looming threats.

Already we, the taxpayers, have lost 32 greenspace hectares to a developer, in a chain of events which has involved not only a skewed Ontario Municipal Board process in 2012 and 2014, but in an outright 2017 July redrawing of Cultural Heritage Landscape boundaries. This adverse chain of events has undermined, perhaps fatally, our conceivable potential case for UNESCO World Heritage List designation. The UNESCO Paris adjudication would surely have to pay heavy regard to local enthusiasm, or lack of local enthusiasm, for conservation – at the David Dunlap Observatory and Park just as in the case of our close UNESCO World Heritage List parallel, the successful Joggins Fossil Cliffs case from Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. Whereas the people of Cumberland County could, and did, hold their heads high at Parks Canada and in Paris, this can no longer be said of the Town of Richmond Hill, and for the various elements in our community – here I direct specific attention to that opponent of full heritage conservation, Councillor Karen Cilevitz – who let our 32-hectare fiasco happen, and in the context of the closed-doors process which was a 2011-through-2012 OMB mediation even approved it.

If we are not vigilant now, the following further bad things may soon occur:

- The developer may unfortunately (in my private, uninformed, opinion) try to follow through with the plan foreshadowed in its application or communication to the Town a couple of years ago – with the plan, namely, to establish a temporary subdivision sales centre in the Administration Building. Such a desecration of national scientific heritage would trigger a legal picket from me, as I have already on one or two previously occasions publicly warned. Picketing is legal insofar as it conveys information to the public without impeding public foot or vehicular traffic. In the event of a legal picket, everyone will suffer, with the Town's reputation taking a particular hit.
- The circa-1865 Elms Lea mansion, or "DDO Director's House" - not mentioned, however briefly, in SREIS.17.021 – may unfortunately be put to something other than its now natural

municipal use. The natural municipal use would be to support Richmond Hill heritage conservation in some way, optimally by becoming our Town's much-needed museum space. I would here remind the taxpaying public, and our Mayor and Council, that our current heritage centre on Church Street, worthy though it is, is too small to serve as a museum, and that our municipal historical artefacts are currently therefore housed out of public sight, in closed storage.

- The Administration Building may, once renovated, unfortunately be put to something other than its now natural municipal use. The natural use would be as housing for two things, and two only: (1) In its office space and auditorium space and library space, as housing for materials and activities supporting astronomical research (including citizen science) and astronomical outreach. (Under this heading would come the offices of some astronomical-outreach entity or entities, conceivably including the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, a recent strain in their diplomatic relations with the Town notwithstanding.) (2) In its wood-workshop, metal-workshop, optics-workshop, sometime photography-darkroom, and electronics-lab spaces, materials and activities supporting some York Region equivalent of the type of citizen technological innovation (important for Ontario's entrepreneurial development) and non-astronomical citizen science successfully pursued by Kwartzlab in Kitchener and by Hacklab in Toronto.

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