

2021 – December – 02

To: The Mayor and Councillor

City of Richmond Hill Ontario

Re: 0 Elgin Mills development

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am the president of The Hindu Temple at 10865 Bayview Avenue Richmond Hill, and I have been a president for three previous terms and a trustee for more than twenty years. We are the immediate neighbours of the above-mentioned property owning a parcel of land about eight acres in extent, where a living monumental temple stands. By attendance and size, it is one of the Largest Hindu Temples in North America and is well known throughout the Hindu community in the world. Unlike other places of religious worship in North America, our temple is attended throughout the year. On special occasions that are celebrated several times a year, we have experienced crowds of over ten thousand. We are not a very prosperous self-sustaining organization and depend on donations of five and ten dollars to operate our temple. However, in a well-developed democracy like in Canada, one man one vote is the norm, the number of worshipers, hence voters are huge, and their strength is most powerful.

As the president, I am obliged to voice the opinion of the more than thousand parishioners who have registered their opposition to the high-rise development at 0 Elgin Mills by signing the petition. We did not get into any aggressive campaigning to oppose the development but will not hesitate to do so if the necessity arises. Richmond Hill has seen a rise of population from 35,376 to 231,400 in 35 years according to Councillor Tom Muench. This has been achieved by reduced tree coverage, increased density and clearing of farms and greenspaces to accommodate mainly condominiums. Thanks to the existence of TRCA that protests the land adjacent to the creek running through our property.

There was never a general meeting or discussion with the life members or parishioners about the condominium development. If any sign of acceptance was given to the developer or the council regarding the 0 Elgin Mills Development, it was never with the consent of most parishioners and catered to the whims and fancies of a few ill informed and self-centered individuals.

Another point of contention is the installation of a very large totally irrelevant sign board hiding the City of Richmond Hill official notice. The very large sign board gives the illusion that there will be only a low-rise townhouse development. However, the signboard on closer examination reveals that it has absolutely nothing to do with the 0 Elgin Mills Development. This tactic of hiding the official notice with a totally irrelevant camouflage had indeed hoodwinked many people who got the impression that the high-rise condominium development has been modified to low-rise condominiums.

Considering the above facts, we request the Mayor and Council to reconsider the development application and preferably not allow any high-rise high-density development at 0 Elgin Mills.

Yours truly

T. Vignarajah P. Eng

President