



**David Dunlap Observatory Park Project
Steering Committee**

Minutes

DDOP#02-23

Monday, October 30, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

225 East Beaver Creek Road

Richmond Hill, Ontario

A David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Steering Committee meeting was held on Monday, October 30, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Committee Members present in Council Chambers:

Councillor Cilevitz (Chair)
Councillor Shiu (Vice-Chair)
Regional and Local Councillor Chan
David McKay
Gloria Marsh

Regrets:

Marney Beck-Robinson

Also in attendance and present in Council Chambers:

Mayor West
Councillor Thompson

Staff Members present in Council Chambers:

D. Joslin, City Manager
K. Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services
T. Steele, Commissioner of Community Services
P. Masaro, Executive Director, Infrastructure and Engineering Services
M. Flores, Director, Policy Planning
D. Hearn, Director, Recreation and Culture
N. Kalyvas, Director, Facility Management
B. Levesque, Director, Infrastructure Delivery

L. Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations
M. Kashani, Manager, Design and Construction
M. McCallum, Project Manager, Infrastructure Delivery
R. Ban, Deputy City Clerk
L. Sampogna, Council/Committee Coordinator
C. Connolly, Legislative Services Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Regional and Local Councillor Chan

That the agenda be adopted as distributed by the Clerk with the following additions:

- a) Delegation by Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update - (Item 5.1);
- b) Correspondence from Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, dated October 27, 2023, regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update - (Item 6.2).

Carried Unanimously

3. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest by members of the Committee under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

4. Adoption of Previous Minutes

4.1 Minutes - David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Steering Committee DDOP#01-23 held February 6, 2023

Moved by: Councillor Shiu

- a) That the minutes of the David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Steering Committee meeting DDOP#01-23 held February 6, 2023, be received.

Carried Unanimously

5. Delegations

5.1 Delegation by Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update – (refer to Item 6.1)

Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, advised that the “Radio Shack” historically utilized by Dr. Ernie Seaquist for radio equipment, was recognized under the City’s Cultural Heritage Landscape By-law 100-09. He acknowledged that staff report SREIS.23.007 recommended decommissioning the building and inquired about the Committee’s vision for the building’s future. He noted that the antenna and tower beside the Radio Shack were not believed to be connected with Dr. Seaquist’s observational equipment, but rather two other towers nearby. Dr. Shelton advised that in their opinion, reconstructing the two antennae into an engaging display at the Radio Shack would serve the public interest, enhance the understanding of the David Dunlap Observatory, and would support educational programs in schools. Dr. Shelton requested clarification regarding the completion status of the repairs and restoration work for the Dome and Administration Building.

6. Scheduled Business

6.1 SRIES.23.007 – Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update

Paolo Masaro, Executive Director, Infrastructure and Engineering Services, provided introductory remarks regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory (DDO) Park Project, noting that Bob Levesque, Director of Infrastructure Delivery would provide an update on the project.

Bob Levesque, Director, Infrastructure Delivery, reviewed the project timeline, grant funding announcements, the projects and activities completed as part of Assignment 2, and projects soon to commence under Assignment 3. He further reviewed Council’s directive as of July 5, 2023; options for site servicing; panhandle works and access road; solar power evaluation; ongoing initiatives for communications, ecological restoration, recreation and culture; and the 2023 to 2029 capital budget and forecast for construction and design. B. Levesque provided an assessment of the Radio Shack and Pump House buildings, and reviewed next steps for the project, and the recommendations as outlined in the associated staff report.

Committee members expressed their gratitude to staff for the presentation and noted they were impressed with the overall design of the site. They complimented the entrance feature signage design options, noted concerns with option two's stability, and suggested to include reference to the David Dunlap Observatory (DDO) as being designated a National Historic Site of Canada. They inquired if sign costs were available and if there was an opportunity to seek public input or arrange a design contest for the signage. Committee also discussed to install signage along the trails to indicate noise levels, aiming to educate users about the significance of wildlife conservation on the property.

Committee members acknowledged staff's recommendation to decommission the Radio Shack building, discussed alternative design options, and inquired whether suggestions from the delegate could be reviewed and presented at a future Committee meeting. The discussion also touched upon the Pump House where it was suggested to install a commemorative plaque, recognizing its significant historical and functional importance.

Clarification was sought regarding the solar power evaluation, and suggested to consult the Town of Newmarket for a comparative assessment of their evaluation payback to determine if it would be feasible in the future for the DDO site. Committee members raised concerns with weekend parking potentially extending into the existing neighbourhood, and inquired if there were plans to install electrical vehicle charging stations. Discussion ensued regarding inflationary pressures and their potential impacts on bid pricing, and inquired whether community funding sources and private sponsorship for the DDO was being considered.

Committee members also inquired about the proposed plan for the combined tennis/pickleball strategy and asked whether the plan could include the game of badminton. Members provided their support for the access road along the panhandle works and emphasized to protect and preserve the solar system park. They expressed interest in adding a rose or pollinator garden along the pathway to enhance its aesthetic appeal and to explore funding opportunities for this initiative. In addition, Committee members expressed their desire for staff to continue discussions with the DDO Defenders.

Moved by: Councillor Shiu

a) That Staff Presentation and Staff Report SRIES.23.007 regarding Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project update be received;

b) That the site servicing, panhandle works and parking lot be combined with the 16th Avenue entrance feature and Elvis Stojko Arena parking lot rehabilitation and that staff proceed with the construction in 2025;

c) That the Radio Shack Building be decommissioned and a heritage plaque installed to commemorate its Cultural Significance.

Carried Unanimously

6.2 Correspondence from Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, dated October 27, 2023, regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update - (refer to Item 6.1)

Moved by: Regional and Local Councillor Chan

a) That the correspondence from Dr. Ian Shelton, Chair, DDO Defenders, dated October 27, 2023, regarding the Richmond Hill David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Update, be received.

Carried Unanimously

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the David Dunlap Observatory Park Project Steering Committee will be held at the call of the Chair.

8. Adjournment

Moved by: G. Marsh

That the meeting be adjourned.

Carried Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m.