

Warehousing flexibility approved along Highway 404

Council approved the site plan at Addison Hall Circle for a zoning amendment that provides flexibility for warehousing along the highway.

Emery Investments had suggested the zoning amendment to provide flexibility with their warehouse use within the 200-metre distance from Highway 404 and to allow accessory uses within the primary use, said Director of Planning Marco Ramunno at the June 6 General Committee meeting.

“That is sort of like a Retail Showroom component within the manufacturing building or distribution building,” he said, explaining how permitting accessory uses will also help secure long-term tenants.

Over the last nine years since the enactment of the site-specific Zoning By-law in 2014 on the subject lands, businesses have evolved in the way on how they are operating, the report read.

The intent of restricting warehousing along highway 404 was partly due to urban design concerns.

“At the same time, the intent was to ensure there are land uses for multistorey office buildings. With the improvement of technology over the years, many office professionals are working remotely, thus the demand for traditional office space has decreased across the GTA. At the same time, the surge in online shopping and other online services has surged and led to a greater need for warehousing and distribution centres,” the report read.

“This shift has been particularly noticeable in areas along Highway 404, where warehousing and logistics businesses have experienced significant growth in the last 10 years. As a result, employment landowners are expanding their land use permission to meet the demand for more logistics and supply chain management.”

Also noted in the report is that the proposed amendment complies with the Official Plan and will attract more job opportunities to help meet the forecasted employment densities within the business park.

Mark Yarranton, from KLM Planning Partners on behalf of Ontario Limited and Aurora Leslie Developments Limited, supported the report addressing planning matters for Monarch Park Gate and Addison Hall Circle.

“I believe that the staff report that Mr. Ramunno and his staff have put together appropriately addresses the relevant planning matters and issues I guess that had been identified. We support the recommendation,” he said.

Addressing some concerns that had been raised by residents living in the area, Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson asked for clarification about whether there would be a lot of change to the fronting on Leslie Street.

Ramunno added that they don't foresee warehouses being added to the Leslie Street frontage because the area is usually zoned for retail, commercial, and institutional uses.

“If there are warehouses proposed to our site plan control, we do have the ability for those any uses to comply with the design guidelines as approved and the applicant has demonstrated the ability to work with us,” he said.

Noting the trend for more warehousing as a result of changes in supply chains, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese questioned whether there have been increases in businesses along the highway.

Ramunno replied that they have seen more of a demand along the 400-series highways for warehousing and distribution facilities.

All existing and future site plan applications within the Addison Hall business park is required to meet the requirements from the Town approved Green Page and Development Standards Checklist. Among other requirements, 30 per cent of the roof are to be provided with one or a combination of the following: Green Roof, Solar PV or Thermal and Cool Roof on all new development.

Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo said he is in support of the development and complimented the environmental focus.

?I was in support of this development way back quite a few years ago, particularly for their environmental concerns and permeable pavements,? he said. ?I'm obviously in support of this.?

Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner said she has also been in support since the beginning.

?I believe the intent was to have more prestige building along the 404. Good for Aurora and also good for the offices,? she said.

Council approved for the report to be received and for the Zoning By-Law Amendment application to be approved to permit warehouse as a principal use within 200 metres of Highway 404 and to permit accessory uses for all principal uses subject to size provisions on the subject lands.

The implementation of the Zoning By-Law Amendment will be brought forward to a future Council meeting for enactment.

By Elisa Nguyen