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Mulock Property Design Concepts Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2020-68

Department(s): Development & Infrastructure Commission

Author(s): Peter Noehammer

Meeting Date: September 29, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Mulock Property Design Concepts dated September 29, 2020 be received; and,
2. That comments on the design concepts received during this phase be used to develop a refined concept that takes the preferred elements from all three themes to create a consolidated design; and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a status update on the activities that have taken place with respect to development of design concepts for the Mulock Property since the last meeting of Council in May 2020. At that time, the Phase 1 Engagement and Visioning portion of the study concluded, and the Phase 2 portion to develop design concepts was initiated. Background information is provided on direction from Council given to the design team. As well, an update is provided on the requested meeting held with neighbouring residents.

The report introduces three “themed” design concepts which will be presented at the September 29, 2020 Special Committee of the Whole meeting, and elaborates on public consultation and next steps to refine a preferred design for the property.

Background

At the Special Council (Electronic) meeting on May 25, 2020 staff presented report 2020-36 titled, Mulock Property Master Plan Phase 1 Reporting – Public Engagement Summary and Design Themes, and PLANT Architect Inc. provided a presentation on the same matter. Council received the report and presentation and gave direction to proceed with Phase 2 master planning for the Mulock Property as per the following recommendations:

- 1. That the staff report entitled Mulock Property Master Plan Phase 1 Reporting – Public Engagement Summary and Design Themes dated May 25, 2020 be received, along with the Mulock Property Master Plan Phase 1A – Technical Memo Draft prepared by PLANT Architect Inc. dated May 15, 2020, the Mulock Property Master Plan Engagement Summary Report – Phase 1B prepared by PROCESS dated May 15, 2020, and their respective appendices; and,*
- 2. That Staff and the Consultants be directed to proceed with Phase 2 of the Mulock Property Master Plan to prepare three (3) design options based on combinations of the five (5) design principles described herein; and,*
- 3. That the Mulock Property no longer be considered as a potential location for a full-size outdoor ice rink; and*
- 4. That Jim Bond Park be included in the design options for the Mulock Property, subject to consultation with the immediate neighbours; and,*
- 5. That the proposed re-use for the house consider a range of options as described herein to allow the design of the property to move forward; and,*
- 6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.*

In the meeting with Council, a number of qualitative questions were asked to help shape the master plan option development. Through the feedback, further direction was given for the master plan options:

- Carefully consider the manner in which Jim Bond Park is incorporated into the overall plan while respecting the privacy of the adjacent residents. Consider buffering, and carefully consider uses that will be less impactful.
- Include a skating path in two of three master plan concepts (which may be considered as a phased approach). The Option 1 skating path was least favoured, and trails should be at least 500m.
- Include a strong art focus but it should not be the central focus overwhelming others.

- Include a water element in all 3 options, but explore different types/scopes in each (e.g., more or less active, a walking/river piece, etc.)
- Consider a conservatory as one of the elements to consider on the site as a year round landscape/garden element.
- One option should really intensely focus on natural experiences of the site.
- Though staff will look into the proposed alternatives, there was not a consensus over the amount of parking, with opinions running from providing no parking (except service and drop off) to expanding the parking. In conjunction with the site uses, the master plan options should consider a range of options from no parking to maximum parking (more than 60), with/without Mulock Drive drop-off, and parking solutions along Mulock Drive only (Option 2) except for possible service parking.
- A separate community covered hub is not considered necessary, but may be useful in the future so will be considered in a phased plan. Look at opportunities within existing building stock of out-buildings for the near future, or in conjunction with other architectural elements.
- An adaptive reuse strategy for the house was presented which offers flexibility, a range of options and criteria for judging potential partners and was accepted at this stage as being complete. Consideration should still be given for which mix of uses would be most ideal for each of the master plan options.

The discussion at council also recommended further study by Town staff on elements of the future plan which include:

- Looking into traffic calming, signage, and other measures to protect the Summerhill neighbourhood from unwanted additional parking and traffic.
- Investigating potential parking capacity and uses in the Hydro Corridor and entering into discussions about easements and other agreements necessary to use the Corridor as a link to the site.
- Explore different shuttle models between sites with available parking
- Explore possibilities for parking agreements with current adjacent commercial properties and schools, and within future development of adjacent properties, possibly through the Planning process.
- Explore possible future walking path access and conveyance of landscape buffer with the property owner to the north when that site is developed.

Discussion

Subsequent to the May 25, 2020 Special Council meeting, a virtual consultation was organized and held with the neighbouring residents around the Mulock Property, as directed by Council. On July 29, 2020, Councillor Broome, Town staff, along with consultants Plant Architect Inc. and PROCESS, conducted the event virtually over Zoom, with approximately 27 local residents in attendance.

The objective of the conversation was to better understand neighbours' experiences and perspectives on the vision for the site and create a dialogue to build mutual understanding and collectively design solutions to address concerns. The conversation focused on three priority topics that were raised in previous consultations: 1) Thoughtful integration of Jim Bond Park with the site, 2) Noise and privacy; and 3) Traffic and parking.

A memorandum dated August 12, 2020 prepared by PROCESS consultants which summarizes the event is appended to this report as Attachment 1.

During this stage of the project, consideration was also given to alternatives to parking and the impact of parking on the site. Meetings were also held with York Region to review this issue as well as high-level parameters on possible access along Mulock Drive. These have been incorporated into the presentation of the design concepts.

As a way of focusing each of the three master plan options, the design team focussed on the types of experiences that could be shaped on the site. Each option would include a range of uses that stem from the guiding principles of Phase 1, but will be implemented in different proportions and characters depending on the themes. The three master plan options developed were based on these themes/actions/experiences:

- Peaceful
- Expressive
- Energized

These themes are conveyed through design illustrations and will be the subject of the PLANT Architect presentation to Council on September 29, 2020.

Following the presentation of the design concepts, input will be sought from members of Council and the public. This will help to develop a refined concept that takes the preferred elements from all three themes to create a consolidated design.

A virtual public meeting is planned for the evening of September 30 to engage members of the public through a Facebook Live event "Designing the future for #MyMulock" at

8:00p.m. During this event, PLANT Architects and Process will present a shortened version of the concepts and residents can share questions or feedback in comments.

During the period between September 29 and October 12, 2020, the Town will also communicate that comments are welcome through links to our HeyNewmarket digital platform where people can visit the design concepts and leave commentary or questions. We will also re-engage the diverse thinkers group that provided valuable input in the last phase.

Next Steps

Following the presentation of the design concepts, and after listening to the feedback from members of Council and the public, the design team will be refining design elements and are planning to come back to Council with the preferred concept late this year. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback during a Special Committee of the Whole, with a subsequent objective of finalizing the preferred concept and Master Plan early in 2021 for Council approval.

Conclusion

The Mulock Property Master Planning project is currently at the stage where 3 design concepts are ready to be presented to Council and the public for feedback. These concepts are meant to explore alternate dominant themes termed as Expressive, Energized and Passive. Some design elements will be common and emphasized more or less among the themes.

The September 29, 2020 Special Committee of the Whole meeting will give Council and the public an opportunity to have a presentation from the design team and an opportunity for feedback. Subsequently, a virtual Public Information Centre will be held during the evening of September 30, 2020 via Facebook Live for broader public consultation. The period between September 29 and October 12 will be available for public feedback on the design concepts and design elements through the Town's HeyNewmarket digital platform.

A preferred design concept will be developed as the next step, taking elements from design concepts that received positive feedback. This is expected to return to Council later this year.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

The Mulock Property Master Plan is an important part of Council's Strategic Priorities for the 2018-2022 term of Council.

Consultation

This report was prepared with input created by various members of the staff and consultant design team.

Human Resource Considerations

None at this time.

Budget Impact

The Master Plan is being carried out with approved budget within the 2020 Capital program.

Attachments

Mulock Property Master Plan – Consultation with Mulock Neighbours, prepared by PROCESS consultants, dated August 12, 2020

Approval

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

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