



Councillor Paul Ainslie
Toronto City Council
Scarborough East - Ward 43

Chair, Scarborough Community Council
Chair, Government Management Committee
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

Date: January 11, 2012
To: Councillor Cesar Palacio, Chair and Member of the Licensing and Standards Committee
From: Councillor Paul Ainslie
Re: Beautification of Vacant Brownfields throughout the City of Toronto

Throughout the City of Toronto there are number of vacant "brownfield" sites dormant without any city planning applications to develop the site.

Many of these properties are found in prominent visual points of interest in communities. A number of the sites served as gas stations situated at major intersections. Today, the sites leave a negative visual impact on the community as they are unkept and rarely have any green area.

In order to positively enhance communities with brownfields, it would be in the best interest of all parties if the properties were beautified to boost their visual impact. This beautification can be as simple as greening the space with sod, a rock garden, benches or a treatment which would showcase the property positively. The beautification would not only serve the community but I believe will aid in the development of the site as future proponents will be able to see the potential in the site.

Sites are deemed brownfields when they are contaminated with metals, petroleum hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Before development of the site a risk assessment is mandatory along with an environmental cleanup. The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) provides financial incentives to encourage brownfield remediation and/or the development of specific employment uses. Further, there is a Authority for Brownfield Assistance, Section 333 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 which provides authority for the City to cancel all or a portion of municipal taxes, or to defer municipal taxes for contaminated properties within a CIPA where a CIP is in effect with policies contemplating tax assistance for remediation of contaminated properties. This section also states the Province may provide for the cancellation or deferral of school taxes as further tax assistance for the purpose of remediation of contaminated properties.

As brownfield sites receive financial assistance and incentives, I believe it is just to request the sites be beautified to a positive reflection of the community they are in, much as adjacent properties already try to do. This opportunity provides for a good working relationship between the community and future development of the site.

Constituency Office,
Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Drive, Scarborough, Ontario M1P 4N7
Tel: 416-396-7222 Fax: 416-396-4286

 Facebook: Councillor Paul Ainslie,  Twitter: cllrainslie

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite C52
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2
Tel: 416-392-4008 Fax: 416-392-4406
Email: councillor_ainslie@toronto.ca, Website: www.paulainslie.com

Recommendations:

1. The Licensing and Standards Committee direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and other relevant City staff, to report back to the committee on the possibility of making it mandatory for property owners of brownfields within the City of Toronto to beautify the site if the property remains dormant for a 6 month period or more.
2. The Licensing and Standards Committee direct the Executive Director , Municipal Licensing and Standards to consult with the Ontario provincial government to see if any provincial legislation needs to be altered to achieve these goals
3. The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and other relevant City staff approach brownfield landowners and stakeholders for their comments on this recommendation in order to begin a positive discussion on improving our neighbourhoods by participating as a good community neighbour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Ainslie', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Paul Ainslie
City of Toronto
Scarborough East Ward 43