

**Minutes of the  
Community Affairs & Planning Committee Meeting  
Held in the Council Chambers, Ajax Town Hall,  
At 7:00 p.m. on November 16, 2015**

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Present:	Chair - Regional Councillor Regional Councillor Councillors	C. Jordan S. Collier M. Crawford R. Ashby J. Dies P. Brown S. Parish
	Mayor	

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She provided a brief overview of the format of the meeting and the opportunities for attendees to make verbal and written submissions.

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by: P. Brown  
Seconded by: J. Dies

That the Minutes of the Community Affairs and Planning Committee Meeting held on November 2, 2015, be adopted.

CARRIED

**4. Public Meetings**

**4.1 Picov Holdings Inc. & Picov Cattle Co.  
Official Plan Amendment Application OPA15-A2  
Zoning By-law Amendment Application Z5/15  
(50 Alexander's Crossing)**

Geoff Romanowski, Development Approvals Coordinator, delivered a detailed presentation on the above noted development applications. An overview was provided of the development proposal and the surrounding land uses. Background information was given regarding OLG's strategy to expand licensed gaming opportunities in Ontario and

its potential implications for the Ajax Downs facility. The applications were reviewed in the context of the relevant planning framework including the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Durham Region's Official Plan, and local planning policies.

Mr. Romanowski overviewed the findings of various reports and studies submitted by the applicant including a Planning Justification Report, a Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, a Transportation Assessment, and a Socio-Economic Study. The significant employment and economic benefits of an expanded gaming facility were highlighted, as well as revenues to the Town of Ajax. Mr. Romanowski also explained the important relationship between the horse racing industry and the OLG program.

A summary was provided of comments received from various agencies following circulation of the planning applications, and various comments submitted during a previously held Public Open House.

### Committee Questions

Committee members posed various questions to staff, to which the following information was provided:

- A referendum is not required in relation to this application, as this would only be required if a new gaming and gambling establishment was being proposed; the proposal is for an expansion of an existing gaming and gambling establishment;
- A referendum was held in 2000 on whether the Town should permit a slots facility; a majority of voters were in favor of having a slots facility within the Town. An extensive public consultation was conducted during this period;
- Significant vehicle infiltration to the adjacent residential communities (primarily the Lexington community to the north and the Wicks/Galea Drive neighbourhood to the south) is not expected to occur. This will be mitigated by the re-alignment of Alexander's Crossing, and completion of the 407 East and 412 highways;
- Traffic patterns and volumes will continue to be studied in the coming months and years to examine the impact of the 407 East and 412 on the existing transportation network in the area;
- Traffic studies in relation to these applications have been available on the Town website for several weeks, which address the multitude of concerns and questions submitted by the public and other interested parties;
- Projections used within the traffic study were very conservative, in the sense that they overestimate traffic volumes and pressures which may result from an expanded gaming facility;
- The traffic study took into account future development potential in the area, to the extent possible; 9 scenarios were examined which assumed various levels of development within the vicinity of the subject lands;
- Sanitary sewer and water capacities for the subject lands and surrounding area are sufficient to accommodate the future development of those lands in accordance with their development potential under the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.
- Ajax Downs is one of eight accredited Responsible Gambling Check Program Facilities; 'Problem Gambling' is not expected to grow significantly as a result of an expanded gaming facility;

- Slots revenues to the Town are primarily used to fund capital projects; without such revenues, those capital projects would require a new funding source which could potentially be the general levy; therefore, a loss of slots revenues could impact tax rates in a 'roundabout' manner, or could impact the Town's ability to deliver priority capital improvements;
- OLG is expected to issue a decision regarding the location of a gaming facility within the C3 zone in early 2017;
- Horse racing in Ajax would likely not survive in the absence of a gaming facility.

### Public Meeting

Chair Jordan declared the meeting to be a public meeting and invited comments from the public.

Syed Imam, 5 Collieridge St, expressed concern about the potential negative social impacts of an expanded gaming facility, including health and safety risks. He cited the Toronto decision not to locate a casino within its downtown area as an indication that such risks exist. Mr. Imam stated that the Town should hold a referendum on the proposed expansion.

Bradley Jacobson, owner of several McDonald's restaurants in Ajax, spoke in favor of an expanded gaming facility in Ajax, stating that the loss of the existing facility would impact Ajax negatively from an economic and employment perspective. The particular importance of the horse racing industry to Ajax was noted. Mr. Jacobson also spoke about the excellent reputation of the Slots at Ajax Downs as being charitable, a good corporate citizen, and promoting a strong ethical culture.

Rob Tyler Morin, 97 Keeble Cres, spoke in support of an expanded gaming facility, noting that many Ajax seniors value and enjoy the slots facility in Ajax. Mr. Morin shared that his mother had moved to Ajax because of the Ajax Downs. As a Ward 2 resident, Mr. Morin noted that he has not heard any expressions from Ward 2 residents that the Slots facility is problematic.

Keith Sarre, 2 Horton St, posed a series of questions to regarding the OPA and ZBA applications, specifically:

- Why did Toronto reject the idea of a downtown casino, and did Ajax consider those reasons?
- Will the applicant be the operator of a potential expanded facility?
- If OLG rejects the Ajax location for a casino, what will be developed on the lands?
- Will there be further opportunities for public input on this matter?
- Will peak traffic times related to the gaming facility align with peak times for adjacent businesses, or will these 'peak times' be offset from one another?
- Will major events such as concerts be permitted on the site, and how will noise be controlled?
- Will operating costs (e.g. for EMS and Fire) increase as a result of an expanded facility?

Mr. Sarre also expressed his view that the 2000 referendum results are no longer current or relevant, and therefore a new referendum should be held in regard to this proposal.

P. Allore, Director of Planning and Development Services, responded to the various questions from Mr. Sarre. It was noted that the Toronto situation has been monitored closely by Ajax staff, however, the Picov applications are examined on their own merit irrespective of any decision in Toronto. At this time, information regarding a future operator of an expanded Ajax Downs is proprietary. Future opportunities for public input will be available, for example during the site plan approval process. Major events would be permitted on the site, but would have to operate in accordance with the Town's noise by-law.

Sean O'Connor, 762 Rossland Rd, spoke in favor of the applications, noting that he shares the Picovs' vision for an expansion of the existing slots facility.

Joe Dickson, MPP for Ajax, remarked that he was highly impressed with the staff report in regard to this matter, and that the horse racing industry is of great importance within Durham Region. Councillor P. Brown noted that Mr. Dickson had submitted a letter strongly supporting the proposed expansion of the Ajax Downs.

John Kapusik, Clarington resident, spoke in support of the applications, citing a letter of support that was submitted by his employer, L an Mowing Ltd, a landscape company that does work at the existing facility. Mr. Kapusik spoke about the integrity and professionalism exhibited by the Picov family, and the economic benefits and employment opportunities created by the Ajax Downs.

Stafford Hemans, 30 Pittman Cres, expressed concern about the possibility that an expanded facility could come under new, irresponsible/undesirable ownership or operation. Mr. Allore noted that gaming facilities are highly regulated and subject to significant oversight by OLG.

Gerard Borean, a lawyer representing 2322244 Ontario Inc (the owner of three properties within Ajax), spoke in objection to the applications. Specific concerns surrounded the traffic implications of an expanded facility; Mr. Borean highlighted what he believes are significant deficiencies within the traffic analysis submitted by the applicant; in his view, the expected number of patrons to an expanded facility have been severely underestimated within the study. Mr. Borean questioned how the estimates were arrived at, and how their reliability was verified. Additionally, Mr. Borean stated that the OPA and ZBA applications are premature and should be considered only after a detailed site plan application is submitted.

Mr. Allore reiterated that he feels the traffic study took a very responsible and conservative approach. It was also noted that it is normal practice to consider Zoning By-law and Official Plan amendments, based on a high-level concept plan, in advance of a detailed site plan.

Nancy Henry, 68 Monk Cres, spoke in support of the applications. Ms. Henry noted that she had spoken with thousands of Ward 2 residents as an election candidate in the 2014 election and though participation in a local Neighbourhood Watch, and that based on these discussions, she believes residents are generally in favor of an expanded gaming facility. Ms. Henry spoke about large events held at the Ajax Downs facility such as the Pan Am Launch event, stating that such events bring the community together.

Bob Broadstock, Nestleton resident, spoke in support of the applications on behalf of Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario, noting that the Ajax Downs race track is world class and makes important contributions to the community. He spoke about the community based, family-friendly atmosphere of the facility.

Ruben Gomez, 26 Barfield Crescent, spoke in objection to the applications, citing concerns about security, safety, and the potential for the facility to attract criminal activity. Some discussion took place surrounding parking lot surveillance.

Greg Watson, a resident of Bethany ON, spoke in support of the applications, speaking favorably of the Picov family and their reputation as generous contributors to the Ajax community.

Elizabeth Perlikowski, 39 Silverwood Circle, noted that she is new to Ajax within the last few years and would have appreciated a referendum to solicit her input on an expanded gaming facility. She stated that she shares previously mentioned concerns related to traffic, and felt that traffic-related questions and concerns were not addressed satisfactorily by Town staff. Ms. Perlikowski inquired about a potential parking garage and whether it would be visible from Kerrison Rd. Gary Muller, Manager of Planning, explained that a berm of approximately 4.5 metres in addition to landscaping features will help to shield the parking structure from view.

Andrew Shawnessi, Dunsford resident, spoke in favor of the proposed slots expansion, noting that he has worked in the horseracing industry for many years. Mr. Shawnessi stated that he and his ten employees rely on the Ajax Downs for their continued employment in the industry.

Earl Robinson, 17 Freeston Cres, spoke in support of the applications, stating that he was very impressed by the staff report on this matter and the degree of study that has gone into it.

The applicant, Justin Picov, 380 Kingston Rd E, was invited by the Chair to speak. Mr. Picov thanked those in attendance for their contributions. He provided a brief history of the Picov's business operations within Ajax and the various expansions that have taken place over time at the Ajax Downs site. He emphasized his particular focus on and commitment to responsible development and fulsome public consultation.

In response to an earlier question, Mr. Picov addressed the comparability of an expanded Ajax Gaming facility to the Niagara Falls casino, stating that the Ajax facility would be more closely comparable to Casino Rama (except without the large entertainment centre and hotel).

There being no further comments, Chair Jordan closed the public meeting.

#### Consideration of Recommendation

Committee members made summary remarks, all of them in expression of support for the proposed expansion of the Ajax Downs. Members reiterated the benefits to the community including revenues to the Town, positive economic and employment impacts, and the leisure aspect of the facility. Several members commented that they had never received a complaint of any nature in regard to the existing slots facility, attributing this in part to the competent operation and strong performance of the facility. Members reflected on the

Town's initial decision to accept a slots facility within the Town, and the public consultation leading up to that decision, commenting that Ajax Downs has integrated seamlessly into the community since then, and that the public appears to support such a facility within the Town.

Committee members thanked those in attendance for their participation in the public meeting.

In regards to the staff recommendation, Clause 5 (in bold, below) was added as a friendly amendment proposed by Councillor Brown and accepted by the Committee.

Moved by: R. Ashby

Seconded by: P. Brown

1. That Official Plan Amendment Application OPA15-A2, submitted by Picov Holdings Inc. & Picov Cattle Co., be approved and that staff be authorized to prepare and forward the amendment to Council for its consideration at a future meeting, as provided within Attachment 1 to this report;
2. That Zoning By-law Amendment Application Z5/15, submitted by Picov Holdings Inc. & Picov Cattle Co., be approved and that staff be authorized to prepare and forward the implementing Zoning By-law to Council for its consideration at a future meeting, as provided within Attachment 2 to this report;
3. That should the Town receive an application for site plan approval for a gaming and gambling establishment on the subject lands, that staff be directed to convene a public open house for information and public input prior to bringing forward the application and staff's recommendation to a future meeting of Community Affairs and Planning Committee; and
4. That the required site plan/development agreement for the lands include a requirement that the external transportation improvements, as identified in the Transportation Assessment, including a northbound right-turn lane at Salem Road/Kerrison Drive, signal timing and phasing optimization for all intersections within the study area, and potential signalization and all turn lane infrastructure at the future intersection of realigned Alexander's Crossing and Audley Road, be installed and constructed at the sole cost of the applicant.
5. **That the Report, along with a covering letter from the Mayor stating Council's endorsement of this expansion, be circulated to OLG, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the MPP for Ajax-Pickering.**

CARRIED

Recorded Vote:

In favor: Regional Councillor Collier, Councillor Crawford, Councillor Dies, Mayor Parish, Councillor Ashby, Councillor Brown, Regional Councillor Jordan

Opposed: None

**5. Presentations**

None

**6. Reports**

None.


**6. Adjournment**

Moved by: M. Crawford

Seconded by: S. Collier

That the November 16, 2015 meeting of the Community Affairs and Planning Committee be adjourned. (9:50 p.m.)

CARRIED



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Chair



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D-Clerk

