

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) - NOVEMBER 9, 2004

WARD REVIEW

Recommendation:

The City Clerk, in consultation with the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services, recommends that Council provide direction on the desired number of local Councillors and whether the possibility of establishing regional wards is to be pursued.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request Council's direction on the desired number of local Councillors prior to a report on ward boundary revision being brought forward and to seek Council direction on whether the matter of regional wards is to be pursued.

Background – Analysis and Options

Prior to the 2003 Municipal Election, the City Clerk reported to Council on the matter of a ward boundary review. At that time, Council directed that the ward boundaries remain unchanged and that a review be conducted for implementation in the 2006 Municipal Election (Attachment No. 1). This report raised the issue of local ward representation and whether Vaughan's constituents were adequately represented relative to other comparable municipalities (see Charts 1 and 2 in Attachment No. 1).

The comparison shows that Vaughan's ratio of local Councillors to population is on the high side except for Ottawa and Hamilton. Given that Vaughan's rate of growth exceeds that of these other municipalities, the ratio of local Councillor to population would be even higher today.

As noted in the earlier report, the issue of whether 5 local Councillors provide Vaughan constituents with adequate and sufficient representation is a matter that needs to be discussed. In addition the workload of the local councillor must be considered. However, it is noted that to the extent that equalizing the ward populations may address the workload issue this issue will be addressed in the ward boundary review. Given the numbers, the size of Vaughan's Council and the challenge of representing the City's constituents, a case can be made for increasing the number of local Councillors. It would be appropriate to address this issue prior to finalizing any new ward boundaries. Should Council wish to increase the number of local Councillors and wards to 6 a public meeting must be held prior to the change being made. In any event, notice must be given of Council's intention to pass a by-law to increase the number of local Councillors and/or to re-divide the wards and a public meeting must be held to consider the matter(s). As there is a 45 day appeal period during which there is an appeal to the OMB, it is staff's intention to report on the ward re-division in the Spring of 2005 to allow for sufficient time for any appeal and to facilitate implementation of the ward re-division in the 2006 municipal election.

A separate, but not unrelated issue, is the matter of regional wards. From time to time this issue has been raised by individual members of Council. The primary thrust of the argument for regional wards appears to be that there would be more effective representation resulting from less duplication and more accountability. Under the current situation, if regional wards were to be implemented three wards would be required. Clearly three does not divide well into the current five wards. However, should the number of local wards increase to six then three relatively equal regional wards would be

more feasible. It is recognized that this might only be in the short term should Vaughan gain an additional representative on Regional Council.

At present there is no City authority to establish regional wards and they currently do not exist in Ontario. However, the Municipal Act provides that the Minister of Municipal Affairs may make a regulation authorizing a regional municipality to pass a by-law providing for regional wards at the request of a regional Council, and further provide that the regional Council would have to follow the statutory procedure to obtain a triple majority in order to pass the by-law. Consequently should Vaughan Council wish to pursue regional wards, it would be necessary to pass a resolution to request that Regional Council pass a resolution requesting the Minister to make the necessary regulation.

It is requested that Council provide direction on the number of local councillors prior to a report on ward boundary revision being brought forward. Further, Council direction is sought on whether the matter of regional wards is to be pursued.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

It would be appropriate to determine the desired number of local Councillors prior to a report being brought forward on ward re-division and to determine if Council wishes to pursue establishing regional wards with the City of Vaughan from which candidates would be selected to represent the City of Vaughan on Regional Council.

Attachments

Attachment No. 1 Report No. 64, Item 2
 Committee of the Whole (Working Session), September 24, 2002

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach, City Clerk

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2002

Item 2, Report No. 64, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 15, 2002.

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WARD REVIEW

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the ward boundaries remain unchanged at this time and that commencing in 2003 staff conduct a review of the ward boundaries and provide a report on the results, for implementation in the 2006 election; and
- 2) That staff prepare a report with respect to the expense portion of the Mayor and Members of Council budget being based on ward population for implementation in 2003.

Recommendation

Council adopted the following resolution at the Council meeting of June 10, 2002, with respect to Item 23, Report 46, of the Committee of the Whole of June 3, 2002:

"The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Clerk, dated June 3, 2002:"

Recommendation

The City Clerk in consultation with the Deputy City Manager and City Solicitor recommends that this report be received and referred to a future Working Session for full discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the electoral wards to determine if any changes are necessary or desirable prior to the 2003 election.

Background - Analysis and Options

Ward Structure

The City's current five-ward system was established prior to and came into effect for the 1994-1997 term of office. The ward boundaries that were adopted attempted so far as was practicable to create areas of relatively equal population so as to ensure proportionately equal representation reflecting the principle of representation by population. Variances in average population were permitted where necessary to accommodate communities of interest and future growth. It was anticipated that the wards that were adopted would be in place for approximately 10 years although it was acknowledged that this would be primarily dependent upon the rate of growth experienced by the municipality.

At this time it is appropriate to review the wards to determine if any changes may be necessary. According to the recent federal census the population as at May 2001 of the City and the various wards is as follows:

Ward 1	46 925
Ward 2	41 038
Ward 3	23 924
Ward 4	36 228
Ward 5	<u>33 907</u>

Total 182 022

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CITY OF VAUGHAN

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It is recognized that this figure is lower than the population estimates provided by the Region of York Planning Department that estimates Vaughan's population at approximately 210,000 as at February 2002. However, the Federal census figures are based on a complete enumeration and are likely the most accurate figures available. Vaughan's population increase between 1996 and 2001 according to the census indicates that Vaughan's annual growth rate is approximately 7.5%. Applying this growth rate, Vaughan's current population is approximately 200,000.

Using the 2001 figures, Vaughan's average ward population is 36,400. As noted above, the wards range in size from Ward 1 at 46,925 to Ward 3 at 23,924. The question whether this range in population is appropriate or acceptable is to a large extent a political one. Ideally votes should carry equal weight. Also to be considered is the workload of individual Councillors. Most recently municipalities have been allowing for plus or minus 25 per cent variance from average ward population. It is noted that the $\pm 25\%$ is based on provincial and federal guidelines. Further, the Province directed that $\pm 25\%$ be used when the City of Toronto wards were established at the time of amalgamation. This was appealed to the OMB, which upheld the use of the $\pm 25\%$ variance. In Vaughan's case $\pm 25\%$ would allow for a variance of from 27,300 to 45,500. It is recognized that Vaughan exceeds this variance.

Also to be considered is whether the population in a given ward is of a size that can be effectively represented. Again the question of whether a ward is too large to be effectively represented is largely political in nature. Factors other than population such as workload, ward make-up, development potential, et cetera, should also be considered. Chart # 1 lists a number of municipalities that are comparable to Vaughan and the ranges in population per ward. Vaughan is at the upper end with an average population per ward of 1:36,409. However, in larger municipalities the ratio is higher such as in Mississauga at 1:76,600 and in Toronto at 1:56,400.

In determining whether Vaughan residents are adequately represented it is probably more appropriate to consider the ratio of population per member of council. Chart #2 depicts these ratios for the same municipalities shown in Chart #1. In this case the figures seem to indicate that Vaughan residents are reasonably represented relative to comparable municipalities to the extent that numbers alone determine adequate representation.

Representation on Regional Council

Also on the same agenda as this report for consideration is a report addressing increased representation for the City of Vaughan on Regional Council. As part of the review for increased representation and recognizing that the trend is to fewer municipalities and fewer politicians, staff considered the feasibility of reducing the number of Local Councillors in Vaughan by one. If this were to be done, Vaughan Council could remain the same size with one more representative on Regional Council. However, the average population per ward with 4 wards would be 45,500. This would be well above the average population per ward of comparable municipalities as noted in Chart #1. Further with Vaughan's expected growth the average ward size will grow considerably. Consequently this strategy of reducing the number of wards was considered not to be feasible.

Should Council consider that additional local representation by increasing the number of wards is desirable due to the fact that Vaughan wards are too large to be able to be effectively represented, a case can be made for this increased representation. Chart #2 indicates that Vaughan has a relatively small council and Chart #1 shows that Vaughan's ratio of population per Local Councillor is on the high side. Thus it could be argued that Vaughan residents should receive additional local representation. As noted above, this runs counter to the current political direction and may not be an option Council wishes to pursue.

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Conclusion

Council has a number of options depending on what it may determine an optimum ward size to be for effective representation. As noted in the report, Council could increase its size to enhance representation at the local level. Should Council consider the population variances between the wards to be inappropriate it could direct the Clerk to bring forward a report addressing new ward boundaries. Alternatively, the status quo could be maintained and a ward review conducted after the 2003 Election.

Attachments

Chart #1
Chart #2

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

CHART #1

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION*	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS	NUMBER OF WARDS	RATIO
RICHMOND HILL	132,030	6	6	1:22,005
MARKHAM	208,615	8	8	1:26,076
BRAMPTON	325,428	11	11	1:29,585
LONDON	336,539	14	7	1:24,038
KITCHENER	190,399	6	6	1:31,729
HAMILTON	490,268	15	15	1:32,684
VAUGHAN	182,022	5	5	1:36,404
OAKVILLE	144,738	6	6	1:24,123
OTTAWA	744,072	21	21	1:35,432

*TAKEN FROM 2001 CENSUS

AVERAGE RATIO 1:25,580

CHART #2

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION*	COUNCIL SIZE	NUMBER OF WARDS	RATIO
RICHMOND HILL	132,030	9	6	1:14,670
MARKHAM	208,615	13	8	1:16,047
BRAMPTON	325,428	17	11	1:19,142
LONDON	336,539	15	7	1:22,435
KITCHENER	190,399	7	6	1:27,199
HAMILTON	490,268	16	15	1:30,641
VAUGHAN	182,022	8	5	1:22,752
OAKVILLE	144,738	13	6	1:11,133
OTTAWA	744,072	22	21	1:33,821

*TAKEN FROM 2001 CENSUS

AVERAGE RATIO 1:21,985