

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – FEBRUARY 15, 2005**

### **AUDIO BROADCAST OF PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS ON THE WEB**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications recommends:

1. That Council receive this report,
2. That the audio recordings of Public Meetings for the City of Vaughan Council be broadcasted across the Web at no cost to the City by VaughanRadio.ca Inc.
3. That Staff proceed to implement and promote the project immediately.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the opportunity to lead governments at all levels towards a model of transparency and openness by broadcasting audio recordings of public Council meetings on the internet. The internet site will be branded as VaughanRadio.ca and will be created and managed at no cost to the City through a non-exclusive partnership with VaughanRadio.ca Inc.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The Smart Vaughan project is currently on hold until the fourth quarter of 2005. In the interim, staff has been investigating quick and simple initiatives, at no financial risk to the City, to take advantage and integrate existing technologies with progressive e-government ideas. In consultation with the City Manager, the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services, the Commissioner of Finance and Corporate Services, the Director of Purchasing Services, the Director of Corporate Communications and the Communication Co-ordinator for Mayor and Members of Council, this recommendation aims to network the citizens of Vaughan by sharing information and knowledge at no expense to the City through the creation of an independent VaughanRadio.ca website. This unique website will be created and managed by VaughanRadio.ca Inc., a local business which will recover its costs by selling advertisements on the website (in accordance with the City's internet advertising protocols). Senior Staff have met with several private sector businesses to determine their level of interest regarding audio and video broadcasting, however, VaughanRadio.ca Inc. is the only company which has come forward and proposed the implementation of VaughanRadio.ca at no cost to the City.

VaughanRadio.ca will enable every citizen to participate on important public issues when it is most convenient to them. From their home or office, at any time of the day, citizens may listen to daily or archived agenda items and corresponding Council decisions. This is a free service to the citizens of Vaughan. It is essential that we create new channels of representative democracy, enabled by information and communication technologies, that encourage effective "on your own time" participation as a legitimate complement to "in-person political participation". This unique initiative will bring Vaughan city hall and its representative process into every home, school, library and place of work that has access to the internet.

All public meetings that take place in Council Chambers will be broadcasted online and recorded digitally. Users may listen to current or archived recordings over the Internet (24/7). For City Staff, there is no effort required to develop, maintain or operate the site - this is done by VaughanRadio.ca Inc. staff. The audio for each meeting will be directly fed into a personal computer with a high speed modem to the internet which will transform the live broadcast of public Council meetings directly to their website [www.vaughanradio.ca](http://www.vaughanradio.ca). This service will not be

exclusive to VaughanRadio.ca Inc. The City will have a disclaimer on the site stating that the Corporation of the City of Vaughan does not endorse any of the ads on the site.

Currently, an opportunity exists for the City of Vaughan to take the leading role in Canada by providing this service to their constituents. This public service has been implemented in a handful of U.S. cities at significant costs to the public. The broadcasting of the public meetings' audio was so successful for the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota that they have now enhanced their broadcasts to include video along with the audio. Video may be a possible next step for the City of Vaughan. The site can also be used for emergency broadcasting as required by council and staff.

Like technological advancements on the Internet, a series of small less noticed e-democracy developments will lead to increased openness with City Hall as well as laying the foundation for the creation of a virtual City Hall.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

The Web Broadcasting of public Council meetings support several key Vaughan Vision 2007 goal statements. They are as follows:

- 1.3.1 Develop and implement innovative alternatives for service delivery.
- 1.3.2 Identify and implement the necessary elements that will create an environment where staff are motivated to provide effective and efficient services.
- 2.4.2 Identify and implement innovative new partnerships.
- 7.2 Initiate a Smart Community Network and E-Government Opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

In an effort to achieve the City of Vaughan's goals to keep our constituents fully informed through various mediums at no financial risk, staff recommends the approval of VaughanRadio.ca website broadcasting. Although built to the City's specifications and internet advertising protocols, the site will be created and managed at no expense to the City through VaughanRadio.ca Inc. through a non-exclusive agreement. This convenient too available at no cost to our constituents 24 hours a day 7 days a week will help them be better informed and more engaged with their City Council. As an e-government tool it will strengthen the connection between Council and the Citizens of Vaughan as we seek to improve our community.

### **Attachments**

Proposed VaughanRadio.ca website pages.

### **Report prepared by:**

Frank Miele, Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications  
Paolo Mancini, Project Manager E-Services

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Miele  
Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications



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Michael Di Blasio



Regional Councillor  
Maria Hall



Regional Councillor  
Linda Jackson



Regional Councillor  
Joyce Protaglia



Councillor  
Peter Maffeo  
Ward 1



Councillor  
Bernie DiVane  
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| DATE   | AUDIO STREAM                           | AGENDA                      |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| February 7 2005<br>committee of the whole                  | <a href="#">listen to audio stream</a> | <a href="#">view agenda</a> |
| January 24 2005<br>special committee of the whole (budget) | <a href="#">listen to audio stream</a> | <a href="#">view agenda</a> |
| January 17 2005<br>committee of the whole                  | <a href="#">listen to audio stream</a> | <a href="#">view agenda</a> |
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VIDEO BRODCAST ARCHIVE

[Vaughan Outlook 2005: Building New Partnerships:  
A Presentation by Mayor Michael Di Biase \(40 minutes\)](#)

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