

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 20, 2005

CITY OF VAUGHAN MISSION TO ITALY

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications, in consultation with the City Manager and the Senior Manager of Business Development, recommends:

1. That Council receive this report and,
2. That Council direct Staff to proceed with the preparations for this Mission

Economic Impact

The costs associated with this Mission have been accounted for within the Foreign Business Development line item within the 2005 Operating Budget for the Business Development section of the Economic/Technology Development Department.

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with a detailed description of a proposed Mission to Italy in July 2005.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan has a number of International Partner Cities around the world, with three (3) in Italy alone. These relationships, with Sora (1992- Official Twin City), Delia (1998- Friendship City) and Lanciano (2002- Friendship City), were created with a cultural and educational focus, and are aimed at promoting exchanges and activities between the citizens, particularly the youth, of the two respective communities.

Despite these International Partnerships, the City of Vaughan should focus on leveraging the cultural strengths naturally present in our business community to further develop the strategic alliance opportunities and promote the international investment opportunities that exist within our own business base, given the numerous companies owned and/or operated by individuals of Italian heritage.

Earlier this year, the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Toronto approached the City with a proposal to build a promotional mission to Italy on behalf of the City, for the purpose of highlighting the excellent opportunities for investment available to Italian industry here in Vaughan. Originally, the Mission was to include a significant number of local industry representatives but it has become difficult to coordinate Mission dates that reflect the availability of Members of Council, the Italian companies and local industry representatives. Staff supports the updated proposal put forth by the Italian Chamber of Commerce suggesting an institutional mission, with a small business delegation, representatives of the Italian Chamber, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, York Region and Vaughan Council with staff support. Members of Vaughan Council who have expressed an interest are: Mayor Di Biase, Regional Councillor Ferri, Regional Councillor Frustaglio and Councillor Carella.

The itinerary would be the following (tentative):

July 19 Depart Pearson International
July 20 Arrive Milan; transfer to Parma
July 21 Parma, Modena, Maranello
July 22 Brescia, Bergamo
July 23 Fiera Milano; Como
July 24 transfer to Rome

July 25 Rome
July 26 Frosinone, Sora
July 27 departure from Rome Fiumicino to return to Canada

In addition to the City Promotion and Investment Attraction objectives, a part of the work of this Mission to Italy is to reconnect with our Sister City in Sora, to continue to build on our mutual agreement to pursue student and cultural exchanges.

PROJECTS WITH SORA FOR 2006:

In 2001, the City sent a small delegation to Italy to rekindle its relationship with its Sister City, Sora. During that visit to Sora, discussions with Sora's government and various cultural and business association representatives revolved around how best to ensure that our Twin City relationship was not only rekindled but somehow remained active and vibrant for the benefit of our respective citizens. To this end, Councillor Ferri and City staff worked with representatives of Sora's key political and business organizations to create a programme of activities, to be carried out between September 2001 and the spring of 2003, which incorporated the business and educational elements of this partnership. Unfortunately, world events on September 11, 2001 meant that the entire educational exchange programme was deferred to a future date. Similarly, the worldwide fallout of the SARS epidemic that we faced in the spring of 2003 effectively derailed additional activities that had been organized in celebration of the twinning between Vaughan and Sora.

It is now possible, through an expression of enthusiasm that has come from the current government in Sora, particularly through the Mayor, Francesco Ganino, to renew our collective efforts to bring to life some initiatives, such as a student exchange, a cultural exhibition and a celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the La Rocca statue dedication, all within 2006. In addition, Mayor Ganino has also expressed a great interest in contributing artifacts to the Italian Interpretive Centre.

AMICI/ITALIAN INTERPRETIVE CENTRE

Over the past two years, the City has received numerous offers from representatives of various Italian governments, Municipal, Provincial (equivalent of our Regional level) and Regional (equivalent of our Provincial level), to contribute artifacts from their respective areas of Italy to our Italian Interpretive Centre. Each of them has communicated this willingness to Regional Councillor Ferri, given his role at the helm of the AMICI organization.

Staff recommends that the City embrace the opportunity, nurtured by representatives of both governments, to solidify our twinning relationship through a series of events and exchanges with Sora and with the broader Province of Frosinone.

Given that Regional Councillor Ferri had begun a discussion with the appropriate contacts in the Sora and Frosinone area to re-build the opportunities set aside over the past 2-3 years due to world events, and given that now Regional Councillor Ferri is obligated to be in Vaughan, as Chair of the Communities in Bloom initiative for the judging process during the very week of this proposed Mission, staff is proposing that Regional Councillor Ferri conduct the business pertaining to the Sora/Frosinone activities and exchanges during the course of his visit to Italy in the first week of July.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Service Delivery Excellence through:

Core Objective #2: Finance and Economic Development

2.5.2 Strengthen the International Partnerships Programme

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

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan has an excellent reputation as a pro-business jurisdiction with a dynamic and diversified economy. This initiative is aimed at strengthening our City's position as an excellent municipality within which to do business by promoting ourselves to an audience with a natural affinity for our Municipality given a cultural and linguistic communality.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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