

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – OCTOBER 6, 2008

PIERRE BERTON DISCOVERY CENTRE- STATUS REPORT

Recommendation

The Preservation of the Berton Artifacts and Memorabilia Steering Committee, in consultation with the Commissioner of Community Services and the Director of Recreation and Culture recommends:

1. That the Pierre Berton Discovery Centre status report, be received.

Economic Impact

There is no direct economic impact related to the approval of this report.

Communications Plan

The Committee will be communicated any outcome resolution made by Council as a result of the review of this status report. The Committee will continue to hold focus groups to identify key issues and address residents' concerns in a final report to Council.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a status report and information regarding the Pierre Berton Discovery Centre project.

Background - Analysis and Options

At its September 18, 2008 meeting, the Preservation of the Berton Artifacts and Memorabilia Steering Committee (hereafter referred to as Steering Committee) requested staff to prepare a status report on the Discovery Centre project to provide Council with an update on the initiative.

This project was initiated in January 2006 when Council approved the appointment of the Steering Committee to examine the opportunities for preserving artifacts from the life of the late Mr. Pierre Berton at a location in Kleinburg. The Steering Committee was given goals and objectives that include determining an appropriate location, facility, operational & governance model and funding sources of a future Centre.

In June 2006, Council approved securing 1.5 million dollars towards the capital construction of any future Centre. Additionally, in September 2006, Council allocated funds to undertake a study of the various sites and options for the proposed Centre. The study's scope included the development of a master plan, including options for site layout and design of the Centre.

The Steering Committee held a public information meeting on April 24, 2008 at the Kleinburg Public School that was attended by approximately 100 people. At the meeting a video presentation on the project was presented that included the vision, programming and possible locations for the Centre. Generally, the attendees identified support for the project. There was concern, however, expressed on the Committee's preferred location for the Discovery Centre at the Old Fire Hall site at Treelawn and Islington Avenue. The site had been recommended due to its location, availability and size.

At the public meeting, a petition signed from approximately 140 households was presented to the Chair of the Steering Committee that stated that although there was support for the Discovery Centre in principle, they did not support the centre location at Treelawn and Islington Avenue and concern was expressed that the proposed location would commercialize the intersection of

Treelawn and Islington and alter the tranquility of the neighbourhood. The petition expressed that those residents would like to see the centre located in the Kleinburg Village Core as it would be better suited and beneficial to the Kleinburg merchants and businesses. They also expressed a desire to be consulted on the project. In response, the Committee pointed out that no final decisions had been made about the location and that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain public input.

Comment forms were also available at the public information meeting to fill out and submit to the Steering Committee. Highlights of the responses were as follows:

- 100% of respondents expressed that the Centre was a good idea and should be in Kleinburg.
- 100% of respondents thought the proposed programming was good.
- Mixed results were received as per preferred location.

As a result, the Steering Committee identified the need for more public consultation on the project and is currently holding a number of focus groups and information sessions with residents of the Treelawn area subdivision to listen to their concerns and try to address them, both at the meetings and also within the final proposal to Council.

The culmination of work by the Steering Committee to date has resulted in a professional video presentation on the vision and programming for the Centre and a draft report presented at the February 12, 2008, Committee of the Whole Working Session.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, however, the necessary resources to undertake the entire scope of this initiative has not been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

Not applicable.

Conclusion

Since 2006, the Steering Committee has met with a number of Kleinburg community stakeholders including the McMichael, the Kleinburg Business Improvement Association, and Kleinburg Area Ratepayers Association to present the concept of the Centre, gain feedback/support and to determine an appropriate location in Kleinburg to house the Centre. It held a charette in September 2007 to gain insight on the possible vision/scope for the Centre and has consulted various industry specialists to determine how best to market and position the Centre. It has held a public information meeting and is currently hold a number of focus groups to ensure the local residents are provided with an opportunity to discuss and make recommendations on the project.

The Steering Committee will continue to hold focus groups, and address residents' concerns in a final recommendation report to Council. The final report will include information related to the

vision, mandate, location, operating and capital costs, programming, and governance for Council's consideration before making a final decision on the project.

Attachments

None.

Report Prepared By

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Respectfully submitted,

Peter Berton, Chair
Preservation of the Berton Artifacts and Memorabilia Steering Committee