

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - MARCH 3, 2009

EARTH HOUR PARTNERSHIP

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS climate change is the greatest threat to our planet's environment and therefore a major concern for all Canadians; and

WHEREAS at precisely 8:30 p.m. on March 28, 2009 major cities around the world will turn off their lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and to symbolize that, working together, the people of the world can make a difference in the fight against global warming; and

WHEREAS the event, called "Earth Hour" a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) initiative that was officially announced in December 2007 at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, attracted the participation of almost 2.3 million Sydney residents, including more than 2,100 businesses, resulting in a 10 per cent reduction across the electrical grid, saving 25,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, the equivalent of taking about 50,000 cars off the road for one hour; and

WHEREAS the following year, in 2008, Earth Hour became the biggest voluntary power reduction in history, with some 50 million people around the world switching off their lights for one hour, during which more than 370 municipalities took part in more than 35 countries across seven continents, including Antarctica, and across more than 18 different time zones; and

WHEREAS the municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) that took part in 2008, the City of Vaughan achieved an energy drop of 3.59% – compared to Aurora 10.15%, Markham 6.02%, Richmond Hill 3.58%;

WHEREAS several municipalities in the GTA and Hamilton have already signed up to participate in Earth Hour 2009; and

WHEREAS participating in this historic event sends a powerful message to every citizen and business around the world that it's possible to take action on climate change and that switching off our lights is just one simple action we can take to help make a difference; and

WHEREAS the goal is to educate the community on the threat of climate change and what each individual and business does to make a difference every day; and to get as many individuals, households, and businesses as possible to turn off their lights as a symbolic statement that now is the time to take action on climate change; and

WHEREAS participating in this historic event sends a powerful message to every citizen and business that the City of Vaughan cares about our planet and is willing to take a leadership position against climate change and global warming;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council approve the venue for the Earth Hour celebrations to be at Woodbridge Pool and Arena parking lot and that the lights in the parking lot be turned off from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; and

That the loan of the City of Vaughan Showmobile, tables and chairs to the local Earth Hour 2009 Committee be approved.

Economic Impact

Minimal

Communications Plan

The Corporate Communications Department will issue a media release upon this recommendation.

Purpose

To demonstrate Council's support for Earth Hour 2009.

Background - Analysis and Options

See attachment.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

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

Regional Implications

None

Conclusion

It is important that the City of Vaughan demonstrate its support for initiatives that address the threat of climate change.

Attachments

AMO Communication to Members.

Report prepared by:

Councillor Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Tony Carella



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ALERT

MEMBER COMMUNICATION

ALERT N°: 09/007

To the attention of the Clerk and Council
February 2, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
 Scott Vokey, AMO Energy Services Coordinator
 (416) 971-9856 ext 357

Municipal Support of Earth Hour and Energy Conservation Week Needed

Issue: Members are invited to support the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Earth Hour and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) Energy Conservation Week

Background:

Earth Hour

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is preparing to host its third global Earth Hour event on Saturday, March 28, 2009, 8:30 - 9:30 pm. Last year 50 million people in 370 cities and towns in more than 35 countries worldwide switched off their lights for Earth Hour. Canada was a global leader, with more than 150 communities participating involving 49% of the country's population. The objectives of this symbolic event are to increase awareness about climate change and demonstrate how individuals can be part of the solution by encouraging as many municipalities as possible to participate.

The WWF is requesting AMO member municipalities support by turning off lights in municipal buildings, encouraging other sectors to participate, measuring energy drop during the event by working with the local distribution company, and engaging residents in post-Earth Hour activities that encourage individual action by highlighting programs and incentives. The WWF can provide support and resources for all of these activities.

Energy Conservation Week

The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) is planning its second province-wide Energy Conservation Week from May 17 - 23, 2009. The purpose is to remind Ontarians about the need for collective action in reaching the province's short and long-term energy conservation goals and to promote a "culture of conservation" among residents, businesses and organizations that saves them money and benefits the environment.

Action: AMO members should sign up online at <http://www.earthhour.org/Canada> to participate in the March 28 Earth Hour and contact WWF at EarthHour@wwfcanada.org for more information.

More information about Energy Conservation Week is available at:
<http://www.energyconservationweek.ca/>

This information is available in the Policy Issues section of the AMO website at www.amo.on.ca.