

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – FEBRUARY 7, 2012

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATIONS IN FEBRUARY 2012

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

1. That the list of activities to be held in February 2012 in the City of Vaughan to commemorate Black History Month as found within this report, be received; and,
2. That the City's activities be posted on the City's website and promoted at City facilities.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan:

- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

Economic Impact

The cost to develop a display, informational material and programs and activities related to Black History Month is included in the Recreation and Culture Department's 2012 Operating Budget.

Communications Plan

The proclamation of February as Black History Month and the list of activities will be posted on the City's website, Council Calendar of Events, and promoted throughout the City and community centres and Vaughan Public Libraries.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the list of activities scheduled to be held in February in the City of Vaughan in recognition of Black History Month.

Background - Analysis and Options

Black History Month is a time to honour and celebrate the achievements of Black Canadians and descent and their contribution to the social, economic, cultural and political life in Canada. It provides an opportunity to learn about and be inspired by the history, pride and strength of Black Canadians.

In February 2009, Council approved the following recommendation from the Community Equity and Diversity Committee:

- 1) That Community Equity and Diversity Committee recommend that February 2009 be recognized as "Black History Month"; and,
- 2) That this proclamation be made on a yearly basis.

The proclamation as declared in 2009 for all subsequent years meets the City's Proclamation policy, as in the following excerpt:

- (ii) If the event, campaign or declaration is directly related to matters over which the City has jurisdiction or the City directly sponsors the event, campaign or other matter.

The celebration of Black History Month supports the City of Vaughan's Diversity Strategy, as approved by Council in 2010, which identifies the goal "to create opportunities for creative cultural expression and dialogue".

List of Activities

February is Black History Month as declared by the Province of Ontario. In support of Black History Month and in partnership with the City of Vaughan, there are a number of activities planned to celebrate the history and culture of Black Canadians in the City of Vaughan. Highlights are as follows:

- **Vaughan City Hall Multipurpose Room: February 19, 2012, 4 pm**
 - The Thornhill African Caribbean Canadian Association (TACCA) and guest speaker Tim Crawford, historian, will present the first viewing of the video regarding the oldest Black loyalist settlements in Upper Canada sanctioned by the British Government entitled "The Drinking Gourd" by Selka Carruthers. This event will also feature music, followed by refreshments.
- **Maple Community Centre: Vaughan Arts Space, February 10 - 25, 2012**
 - The Vaughan African Canadian Association will present an exhibit on "CariVaughan: The History of Carnival", an exploration of the history of Carnival and playing mass from its African spiritual and cultural origins to modern day Carnival parades as celebrated worldwide. Opening ceremony and reception will be held on February 10, 2012. Viewing of cultural exhibit will run until February 25, 2012.
- **North Thornhill Community Centre: Winterfest, February 5, 2012**
 - The Vaughan African Canadian Association (VACCA) celebrates *Winterfest* with its presentation of "CariVaughan: Ringing in the sounds of CariVaughan" on Sunday, February 5, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm.
- **York Regional Police: January 28, 2012.**
 - Music and art displays will be posted at the Safety Village on January 28, 11am – 1pm. Chief Eric Jolliffe will pay tribute to the outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to Canada and the world at large.
- **Schools in York Region: Black History Essay Writing Contest**
 - The Vaughan African Canadian Association (VACCA) will also be facilitating a Black History Essay Writing Contest throughout schools in York Region, highlighting this year's theme "Out of Many, One People", celebrating Jamaica's 50th Anniversary of Independence.
- **Vaughan Public Libraries**
 - Art displays, author visits and African and Caribbean story time at library locations across Vaughan. Full details are found on Vaughan Public Libraries website, www.vaughanpl.ca

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

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, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

The history of the Black Canadian community is part of the culture of our City and the celebration of Black History Month works towards reaffirming our efforts to build an inclusive society and celebration diversity in our community. The proclamation of February 2012 as "Black History Month" and the list of community activities as noted within this report will be posted on the City's website, and at community centres, Vaughan City Hall and Vaughan Public Libraries.

Report Prepared By

Mary Reali, Director of Recreation and Culture, ext 8234
Angela Palermo, Manager of Cultural Services, ext 8139
Mirella Tersigni, Community Development Coordinator, ext 8459

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services