

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2009

Item 1, Report No. 7, of the Environment Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 13, 2009.

1 SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Environment Committee recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager and Director of Economic Development, dated September 21, 2009:

Recommendation

The City Manager and Director of Economic Development recommend that:

1. This report be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The purpose of this program is to provide information on energy conservation, specifically geared towards the small business community in Vaughan. This program supports Objective 5.1 of Green Directions Vaughan: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community, as well as Objective 1.2: To promote reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Vaughan and Objective 4.3: To encourage the establishment of green businesses and sustainable business practices.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact from the receipt of this report.

Communications Plan

A communications strategy for this project will be developed in conjunction with the Economic Development Department, the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre (VBEC), PowerStream and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Information on the program and seminars will be made available through the City's website, online calendars, City Page online and through local media sources. VBEC, PowerStream and the TRCA will also distribute the information through their networks and to their clients.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and background information on the City of Vaughan's partnership with VBEC, PowerStream and the TRCA to deliver an energy conservation program designed for the small business community in Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

In June 2009, Economic Development and VBEC staff met with PowerStream and the TRCA to discuss several existing programs, including the TRCA's "Greening Retail" program and PowerStream's conservation programs, the Electricity Retrofit Incentive Program (ERIP) and the Power Saving Blitz.

During this discussion, it became clear that given the composition of Vaughan's business community, that is 92% small businesses with fewer than 10 employees, programs geared towards larger companies with greater access to resources would not be a good fit. While there are several programs and resources available, continually Economic Development and VBEC

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staff hear from the business community that they do not have time to investigate these programs, preventing them from benefitting from the energy and cost savings. Given the current economic downturn, and pending changes in electricity pricing, there is a need to provide the small business community with concise and timely information on how to understand and manage energy costs. A partnership between Economic Development, VBEC, TRCA and PowerStream is ideal for addressing this need.

Beginning in August 2009, local distribution companies will begin to implement time of use rates. For many small businesses, this shift of electricity costs (to a higher rate during business hours) will create a significant burden on a sector that is already struggling in the current economic reality.

Working closely with VBEC, which already has a close connection to the small business community, a series of seminars will be developed and delivered with PowerStream and the TRCA. The first of these seminars "*Understanding your energy bill and how to reduce it*" will take place on October 27, 2009 and will be hosted by PowerStream. The seminar will focus on budgeting for energy costs (many small business owners significantly underestimate these costs according to PowerStream and VBEC), the best options for retrofits and upgrades and information on incentives. The second seminar will focus on the Feed In Tariff (FIT) program, part of the Green Energy Act, and alternative energy options for small business. A third seminar has also been discussed regarding water conservation. These seminars will also assist Economic Development in its continuing efforts to understand the needs of and outreach to local businesses.

As small business represents a significant market in York Region, PowerStream and the TRCA will be approaching this program as a pilot with the intention of expanding its delivery over its larger service territory.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This initiative supports the City's Vision 20/20 objective to "Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability".

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

Small businesses, with twenty or less employees, account for the majority of businesses in Vaughan. As such, a program is being developed by the City of Vaughan and the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre, in conjunction with PowerStream and the TRCA, to provide a series of energy conservation seminars to highlight resources and programs available. In the current economic climate, and the coming switch to time of use rates, these seminars will provide support for the small business community.

Report prepared by:

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Item 2, Report No. 7, of the Environment Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 13, 2009.

2 **COMMUNITY LAWN CARE AND GARDENING WORKSHOPS**

The Environment Committee recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager and Director of Economic Development, dated September 21, 2009:

Recommendation

The City Manager and Director of Economic Development, in consultation with the Director of Parks Operations and Forestry recommend that:

1. This report be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

The purpose of this series of community workshops is to provide information and resources on natural gardening and lawn care practices and specifically supports Objective 5.1 of Green Directions Vaughan: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact from the receipt of this report as budget has been allotted to support pesticide education programs in conjunction with the City By-law and the provincial legislation.

Communications Plan

A communications strategy for this project will be developed in conjunction with the Economic Development Department, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Information on the program and workshops will be made available through the City's website, online calendars, City Page online, displays at the library and through local media sources.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and background information on the City of Vaughan's partnership with the Vaughan Public Libraries and the TRCA to host a series of community workshops.

Background - Analysis and Options

In Spring 2008, the City of Vaughan implemented a by-law to regulate the use of pesticides for cosmetic application. The by-law prohibited the use of in-organic, often dangerous chemicals. The City's website and promotional materials promoted safe alternatives and natural solutions to maintaining a healthy lawn and garden to support the by-law and educate the public.

In April 2009, however, the provincial *Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act* (Bill 64) received royal assent and rendered all municipal by-laws "inoperative". In response to this change, the City, in partnership with Communities in Bloom, delivered seminar on healthy lawns and gardens on June 1st, 2009. While the City of Vaughan's pesticide by-law no longer applies, the City continues to receive requests from the public, and businesses, on what is permissible under the new regulations indicating an ongoing need and appetite for additional events like this.

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In order to meet this need, City staff have partnered with the TRCA and the VPL, to deliver a series of workshops. The workshops will address not only what is permitted under the new regulations, but also present information about native species, water efficient gardening and caring for urban trees.

The first in this series of workshops was held at Maple Public Library on August 26th. 32 people attended the presentation titled “Creating a Luscious Lawn the Natural Way”. The response was favourable and attendees received a free bag of grass seed, handouts and information on City initiatives and the provincial pesticide ban. A representative from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) also attended, provided a brief overview of the provincial regulations and acceptable products. Staff from Parks Operations provided a presentation on how the City maintains healthy lawns and gardens.

Additional workshops for the general public will follow in the late fall and early spring and may include topics such as: composting, creating a rain garden, garden design, growing your own vegetables and putting your garden to bed. Future workshop topics will be decided, in part, based on feedback from the public.

A special workshop is being developed for property management and lawn care companies in Vaughan to provide them with information about what is permitted under the new regulations and provide education about alternatives, such as native and water-efficient species.

The TRCA has implemented similar workshops successfully in neighboring municipalities in partnership with the Town of Markham and the Region of Peel. Given their expertise in natural gardening techniques, native species and public engagement, the TRCA is an invaluable partner in this endeavour. It is anticipated that future workshops will continue to include participation from relevant City departments as well as representation from the MOE.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This initiative supports the City’s Vision 20/20 objective to “Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability”.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

During the implementation of the City’s by-law regulating the use of pesticides for cosmetic reasons, public education was identified as a priority. While the current provincial regulations render municipal by-laws inoperative, there remains much confusion from the public regarding, not only what is permissible, but also what alternatives are available. Partnering with the TRCA and VPL, the City of Vaughan has initiated a series of community workshops to address these concerns from the public.

Attachments

1. Workshop poster
2. Newspaper advertisements

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

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Item 3, Report No. 7, of the Environment Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 13, 2009.

3

REUSABLE BAG PROJECT - UPDATE

The Environment Committee recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager and Director of Economic Development, dated September 21, 2009:

Recommendation

The City Manager and Director of Economic Development recommend that:

1. The Environment Committee direct staff to proceed with extending the reusable bag program and the suggested modifications to the program for 2010.

Contribution to Sustainability

This project, initially the result of a Council resolution passed in September 2006 to address excessive packaging, also addresses Green Directions Goal 5, Objective 5.1: To share best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community. The reusable bags function as educational giveaway, opening a dialogue regarding sustainable choices, as well as providing residents with an alternative to disposable plastic shopping bags.

Economic Impact

There is no additional economic impact resulting for the receipt of this report. Resources have been allocated in the 2009 budget.

Communications Plan

A communications strategy for this project will be developed in conjunction with the Corporate Communications Department and the Economic Development Department. The reusable bags will be distributed through the existing partnership with Welcome Wagon and at selected events.

Purpose

To obtain Environment Committee direction to proceed with continuing the environmentally-friendly bag project.

Background - Analysis and Options

On November 27, 2007 the Environment Committee approved a pilot project to distribute 2500 reusable shopping bags. The shopping bags were purchased in partnership with PowerStream, which provided half of the funding. During the pilot period, Welcome Wagon distributed approximately 60-80 bags per month and staff distributed approximately 1000 at various events. A limited number of bags were also available to members of Council to distribute.

Feedback from the public, staff and other community members on the bags was very positive. The most noticeable constraint of the program, however, was the necessary staff time and space required to include brochures, etc. in each bag. It is recommended that the program be continued, but the bags be provided to Welcome Wagon and the public empty. Environmental information will still be made available to Welcome Wagon to include, as well as be available at any public event where staff is distributing bags.

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PowerStream initially agreed to renew funding for the project in 2009, following the distribution of all for the initial stock. However, with the launch of PowerStream's new sustainability program "Go Green With PowerStream", it may not be feasible to partner with PowerStream on this initiative. PowerStream requested the City proceed with an environmentally-friendly (containing recycled or organic content) and North American-manufactured bag. While bags meeting these specifications do exist, they range in price from \$3.00 to \$6.00 per bag making the cost prohibitive. Thus it may not be feasible to continue the partnership with PowerStream on this project. It is recommended that the City proceed with the purchase of a more reasonable priced bag, with recycled content and/or vegetable ink, manufactured offshore to ensure responsible use of resources and to maximize the number of units available for distribution.

It is recommended the bags be given away free of charge as a tool for environmental education to motivate positive behaviour change. As reusable bags begin to saturate the market, it is highly unlikely that a public appetite will exist to purchase the bags.

Staff have reviewed a number of potential options for a City of Vaughan reusable bag. Of the available options, staff have recommended the city proceed with the following product (based on balancing environmental and economic attributes):

- 85% PET recycled material, made in China, conventional ink - \$2.86 + tax/bag (Note: 1% of the sales of these bags supports the World Wildlife Fund).

It is recommended that the partnership with Welcome Wagon continue as a mechanism for distribution. Additionally, staff will distribute the bags at selected community events and Council will receive a limited number for their own purposes. Councillors wishing to distribute additional bags will be able to purchase them on a cost recovery basis. Based on a budget of \$6000, the City will receive approximately 1800 bags.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This initiative supports the City's Vision 20/20 objective to "Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability".

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

In 2007/2008, the City ran a successful pilot project in partnership with PowerStream and Welcome Wagon to distribute reusable shopping bags to citizens in Vaughan. Given the success of this initial project, It is recommended that the City continue the program in 2009 ordering reusable bags to be distributed through Welcome Wagon and at events. Staff will re-evaluate this program on a year-to-year basis to determine if it should be continued or if there are other educational, or promotional products which may be more relevant as reusable bags become accepted and part of everyday behaviour.

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Item 4, Report No. 7, of the Environment Committee, which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 13, 2009, as follows:

By approving that staff contact all appropriate parties for a full review of the micro surfacing process and report back to a Committee of the Whole meeting prior to rescheduling the commencement of the projects.



4

MICRO SURFACING OF ROADWAYS

The Environment Committee recommends:

- 1) That the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works make a presentation on the micro surfacing being undertaken by his Department, to the September 29, 2009 meeting of the Committee of the Whole; and
- 2) That the information entitled, "Micro Surfacing – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)", be received.

The foregoing was brought to the attention of the Committee by Councillor Carella.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

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Item 5, Report No. 7, of the Environment Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 13, 2009.

5 UPDATES ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The Environment Committee recommends:

- 1) That each Department in turn present a report to Committee of the Whole on its environmental sustainability initiatives relating to Green Directions Vaughan.**

The foregoing was brought to the attention of the Committee by Councillor Shefman.