

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JANUARY 21, 2002

VAUGHAN GROVE SPORTS PARK – CHANGE IN LICENCE FOR HISTORIC HOUSE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Director of Legal Services recommends:

That the City of Vaughan support the request by Shining Through Centre For Children With Autism for the use of the Tushingham historic house for the provision of their services; and

That staff provide a report to Council on January 28th outlining the specific requirements with respect to changes required to the License Agreement between the City of Vaughan and the Canadian Seniors Development Corporation and other actions which may be required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee of the Whole with information regarding the request by the Shining Through Centre For Children With Autism for the use of the Tushingham Historic House for their purposes.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Shining Through Centre For Children With Autism is in need of a location to serve their clients in Vaughan and York Region. They have been in discussions with Mr. Paul Rosetto, of the Canadian Seniors Development Corporation. This company owns the Tushingham Historic House which is situated on lands on the east side of Martingrove Road south of Highway 7, shown on Attachment 2. The lands are leased by the City from the Ontario Realty Corporation for Vaughan Grove Sports Park. When the Villa Giardino development was approved, the "Tushingham" house was moved to its present site to be preserved and used for community use, namely a seniors centre. The main floor of the house was renovated for use as a Sales Centre, however additional renovations will be required to convert the house into a community facility. The City has a License Agreement with the Canadian Seniors Development Corporation for the use of the lands containing the house and a 26 car parking lot around it.

The Shining Through Centre have been negotiating with Mr. Rosetto with a view to purchase the house, however, that would require the City terminating the agreement with Canadian Seniors Development Corporation and entering into a new agreement with Shining Through.

Staff has recently met with the Shining Through representatives as well as Mr. Rosetto, however there has been insufficient time to review all aspects of this proposal such as zoning, building permit requirements, ORC approval, and other considerations. A report will be brought to Council.

An information sheet regarding the Centre is attached as Appendix 1.

Conclusion

Although the proposed use of the Tushingham house by Shining Through Centre for Children With Autism does not fit with the original intent for a seniors centre, it is a non-profit charitable community service agency that would serve a community need and is appropriate in that setting.

Attachments

1. Shining Through Centre For Children With Autism Information Sheet.
2. Location Map

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Commissioner of Community Services

Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner of Community Services



Shining Through

CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

SHINING THROUGH

Shining Through Centre for Children with Autism ("Shining Through") is a not-for-profit charitable organization established and committed to providing the best available centre based Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) treatment for children with autism/PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) in York Region. The alarming increase in diagnosis of Autism has created a dire need for quality ABA therapy providers. Although traditional home based ABA programs have proven to be valuable in their own right, such formats are typically fraught with several challenges for families including, recruitment of qualified therapists, high costs attributable to training therapists, child isolation from peers and limited resources and networking opportunities.

Through the dedication and commitment of a group of parents of children with Autism seeking quality programming and intervention for their children and a volunteer Board of Directors, Shining Through was founded in January, 2001. In addition to its role of providing long-term direction and strategy, the Board of Directors is also responsible for liaising with the ABA Program Director/service providers, fund raising initiatives and facility management. In the future, Shining Through will also provide outreach services for families.

At Shining Through, each child will have an individualized program focusing on receptive and expressive language, academics, social skills, self-help skills and play skills, which will be taught through one-to-one and small group sessions. The children will have daily opportunities to socialize with other children teaching them to relate to peers and participate in group activities. Although each child's schedule is designed to meet that child's needs, all programs will emphasize language development and social skills. A full day program at Shining Through runs from 9:00am to 3:30 pm 5 days a week.

Family involvement is fundamental to the success and progress of the children at Shining Through therefore, parents will be encouraged to take part in monthly meetings to discuss and develop the child's program and family goals.

ABA SERVICES

ABA is a scientifically proven treatment of teaching children with Autism utilizing very precise charting and recording procedures, to ensure accurate records of progress, which is why it is the only intervention currently recognized by the medical community as providing observable, measurable, and lasting progress in children with Autism/PDD. Studies to date have shown that all autistic children in an intensive well-supervised ABA intervention program have received gains in some or all areas. Nearly 50% of preschoolers engaged in such an ABA program can transition successfully to regular school classrooms functioning at the level of their peers.

The costs of running an intensive Centre based ABA program are extremely high and as a result, fund raising is a vital part of the continued success of Shining Through and its children. Parents of the children at Shining Through are encouraged to take as active a role as possible in the various fund raising initiatives carried out by Shining Through to help subsidize the costs to the families.

For further information on Shining Through, Autism or ABA, please do not hesitate to contact our Center.

