

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE NOVEMBER 18, 2002

STATUS REPORT ON TWINNING ACTIVITY WITH CITY OF LANCIANO, ITALY

Recommendation

That the Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications recommends that this report be received.

Purpose

The purpose is to provide an update on activities pertaining to the Friendship Twinning with the City of Lanciano, Italy.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan and the City of Lanciano, Italy began discussions more than two years ago with a view to developing a closer working relationship that would bring social and economic benefits to the residents and businesses of both cities.

Delegations from the City of Vaughan traveled to Lanciano in 2000 to learn about their city. In the spring of 2001, municipal elections in Lanciano resulted in a change in the leadership of the city. The newly elected Mayor of Lanciano expressed an interest in continuing the dialogue begun by his predecessor with the City of Vaughan and, as a result, a small delegation from Vaughan visited Lanciano in July 2001 to meet with the new administration and to lay the groundwork for the actual Twinning activity in 2002.

Activities and Outcomes:

The City of Lanciano sent Mr. C. Bomba, Twinning Co-ordinator, to Vaughan in early May 2002 to make the final arrangements for the Friendship Twinning Week of activities planned for July 2002 in Lanciano; and to begin planning, together with Members of the City of Vaughan Friendship Steering Committee, the Official Twinning Ceremony here in Vaughan.

The City of Vaughan sent a delegation, comprised of 4 Members of Council and 2 Senior Staff, to Lanciano for the Official Ceremonies, which took place between July 7th and July 13th, 2002 inclusive. Officials from Lanciano planned a week of activities which included visits to local industries, visits to local schools including the Canadian College in Lanciano (owned and operated by Vaughan residents), as well as visits to regional government agencies involved in export market development on behalf of their constituencies.

In October, between the 7th and the 14th, the City of Lanciano delegation visited Vaughan with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, 4 Members of Council, representatives from the fields of education and health as well as key industry leaders.

During the course of their visit, the delegates met with local industry leaders in the plastics and food & beverage sectors. They were also given an opportunity to learn about our way of life by visiting local structures such as schools, community centers, sports facilities and art galleries.

Local media coverage included Vaughan Citizen and Lo Specchio, as well as the Corriere Canadese, CHIN Radio, and OMNI (cable 47).

The Official Signing Ceremony, held on October 9th in Council Chambers was well attended by the local Lancianese community, members of Vaughan's business community and government representatives.

Conclusion

The Official Friendship Twinning between the City of Lanciano and the City of Vaughan is just the first step towards creating stronger social and economic ties between both cities.

The partnership was well received by the local community at large as well as by local business people that, in the course of the industry visits, expressed an interest in learning more about the area of Lanciano and its industries and, especially, where there might be opportunities for market expansion for their goods or for joint venture collaborations.

A strong interest in a collaboration between schools in Lanciano and local schools was expressed by the representatives with the Lanciano delegation at both the elementary and secondary school level and a pledge was made to develop a continuous and consistent plan for student exchanges beginning in 2003.

In addition, Lanciano's Councillor responsible for culture and recreation will be planning a sport exchange program with our local soccer clubs.

Finally, it was agreed that dialogue between the administrations should continue with a view to developing a technological collaboration and an exchange of best practices. Staff will work closely with the many public and private contacts made throughout the Friendship Twinning, and continue to update Members of Council on the progress of any activities generated, as a result of our collective efforts.

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Frank Miele
Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications