

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, SEPTEMBER 15, 2003

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE/VAUGHAN NATURE CAMPS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services respectfully requests direction on this matter.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council direction on the proposed Outdoor Education Centre in partnership with York Region District School Board.

Background - Analysis and Options

On June 23, 2003 Council deferred the item regarding the proposed Outdoor Education Centre, in order for staff to explore potential partnership opportunities. The item is attached as Appendix A.

The York District Board has approved the project, subject to receiving approval by Vaughan Council. They are anxious to obtain an answer from Vaughan, as to whether this project will be proceeding at this time. From Vaughan's perspective, it would be beneficial to undertake the renovations in the winter of 2004, in order for the building to be ready for use by the Nature Camp programs in the summer.

Staff have not, as yet, had an opportunity to explore additional partnership opportunities, in particular with the private sector. There are many options for partnering on the Maple Nature Reserve lands. Some examples would be trail development, public education programs, arboretum development, etc. These opportunities would not interfere with the proposed Outdoor Education Centre, and in fact the renovated facility could be used on evenings and weekends for community education, meetings and so on.

If Council wishes this project to proceed, the staff recommendations of June 23rd, 2003 should be approved; or alternatively the City could undertake the capital renovations and then permit the space to the Boards of Education.

Conclusion

Council direction is required, the York Region Board has requested a formal response.

Attachments

1. Outdoor Education Centre/Vaughan Nature Camps - June 23rd, 2003.

Report prepared by:

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner, Community Services

Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner of Community Services

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 23, 2003

Item 7, Report No. 51 of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 23, 2003

7 OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE / VAUGHAN NATURE CAMPS

The Committee of the Whole recommends that this matter be deferred to allow staff to explore potential partnership opportunities.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Director of Buildings, Facilities and Parks recommends:

1. That staff be directed by Council to pursue and finalize a joint use agreement with the York Region District School Board for use of the Maple Nature Reserve and Carpenter's Building as an outdoor education center; and,
2. That staff be directed to proceed with retaining an Architectural Consultant to prepare plans for the Carpenter's Building renovation that will serve as the outdoor education center and the City of Vaughan Nature Camps.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval by the Committee and Council to proceed with pursuing and finalizing a joint use agreement with the York Region District School Board for use of the Maple Nature Reserve and Carpenter's Building as an outdoor education center.

Background - Analysis and Options

In June of 2000 the City of Vaughan approved the Maple Valley Parks and Open Space Strategy known as the Maple Valley Plan. The plan integrated the Parks and Open Space planning for the entire Keele Valley area including the former MNH lands on the east side of Duffan Sewal. The former MNH lands were acquired by the City for the purpose of conservation and recreation uses in 1997.

Included in the Maple Valley Plan were specific recommendations for the MNH lands and that the lands "be retained as a natural area and designated as a passive park within the City's park system". The primary activities envisaged were those related to:

- Ecological Restoration and Educational Benefits
- Recreation Programming
- Civil Administration
- Land Stewardship and Resource Management
- Community Uses and Passive Park
- Trail Development

Community consultation was undertaken in the form of stakeholder meetings. The stakeholders included ratepayer representatives, environmental groups, conservation groups and other interested persons. Four meetings were held on May 22nd, July 9th and September 24th of 2002 and May 12, 2003. In addition agencies were consulted, including the TRCA and Don Council, York Region District School Board and the York Region Separate School Board.

Of note was the interest the York Region District School Board showed for partnering with the City to utilize the site for outdoor education.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

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Several meetings have been held with the York Region District School Board to review their interest in utilizing the Maple Nature Reserve and the Carpenter's Building as an outdoor education center. It is the Board's intent to utilize this outdoor education center from September 1 to June 30 for a ten year period commencing in October of this year. The Board estimates that a maximum of 40 children would attend the site at one time. The City will continue to utilize the Maple Nature Reserve for its summer day camps and recreation programs from July 1 to August 31 and during both the Christmas and March breaks.

The York Region District School Board's intended use of the entire two floors of the Carpenter's Building will require that the structure be renovated so that it meets current building code standards. A study undertaken by Buildings and Facilities identifies that the required renovations must include the addition of one washroom, structural support for the second floor improvements to the exit staircase from the second floor, and installation of drywall throughout the entire first floor based on the York Region District School Board's intended use of the building.

In order to complete the required renovations an Architectural Consultant must be retained to prepare drawings and specifications for the renovation of the Carpenter's Building. The York Region District School Board will contribute 9/12ths of the consulting fee costs and the City of Vaughan will contribute 3/12ths of the total capital renovation costs, which are estimated to be approximately \$15,000.00 (City of Vaughan share is approximately \$3,750.00). 2003 capital funds are available to secure this consultant.

Capital expenditures for the renovation to the Carpenter's Building will be cost shared by the York Region District School Board and the City of Vaughan. The York Region District School Board will contribute 9/12ths of the total capital renovation costs and the City of Vaughan will contribute 3/12ths of the total capital renovation costs, which are estimated to be approximately \$180,000.00 (City of Vaughan share is approximately \$45,000.00). A funding source has yet to be identified to pay for the City of Vaughan's share of the renovation costs. The York Region District School Board is currently finalizing approvals of their share of the required capital funds for the renovation of the Carpenter's Building.

Conclusion

Approval by Council will allow staff to pursue and finalize a joint use agreement with the York Region District School Board for use of the Maple Nature Reserve as an outdoor education center.

Approval by Council to retain an Architectural Consultant to undertake the preparation of drawings and specifications for the Carpenter's Building will facilitate renovations required to stage York Region District School Board outdoor educational programs and City of Vaughan summer nature camps.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Paul Gardner, Manager, Parks Development