

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 21, 2004

CITY OF VAUGHAN SENIORS' STRATEGY

Recommendation

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri recommends that this preliminary report prepared for the Mayor and Members of Council on the development of a Seniors Strategy for the City of Vaughan be received for information, and that a full report be submitted to Council in the Fall of 2004.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the future development of the Seniors Strategy for the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

The number of senior residents in Vaughan continues to grow. The city makes every effort to provide the required programs and services to meet the new and emerging needs. This is done through the City's Community Services Department either through direct programming or in cooperation with community groups, volunteers and public government and non-for-profit agencies who also provide services and assistance.

Due to the increase of requests for services and support, it may be appropriate to review the current service levels provided for Vaughan seniors by the City of Vaughan. As part of the strategic planning review process in January, 2004, Members of Council agreed to look into the development of a seniors' strategy that would provide direction and a plan to support the delivery of services for this growing segment of the City's population.

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri agreed to lead this initiative and work with the community and city staff to develop the Seniors Strategy and provide a report to Council for their review and approval. As a follow-up to this initiative a series of meetings were held with individuals, community members and seniors clubs to identify needs and establish a series of steps to develop the Seniors' Strategy.

Towards a Seniors' Strategy

One of the first initiatives organized was a Seniors' Information Day that was held on June 2, 2004 at Paradise Banquet Hall between 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. At this forum over 50 exhibitors and guest speakers were on hand to provide information and support to over 400 seniors from across the City of Vaughan. Among the topics covered were nutrition and health, leisure, home care services, financial planning and taxation, positive lifestyles, transportation, housing and other topics important to seniors.

Also on hand at the opening ceremony was Mayor Michael DiBiase, local councillors Sandra Yeung Racco, Susan Kadis and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri along with many other organizations and groups providing services to seniors. Beechwood Cemetery and Mausoleum organized and sponsored the event in cooperation with the City of Vaughan.

To obtain further feedback and involvement by the senior's community, a special meeting was held at the event with representatives from 10 seniors clubs in attendance. The clubs involved included:

Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club
East Woodbridge Seniors' Club
West Woodbridge Seniors' Club

Pine York Seniors' Club
Garnet Williams Seniors (formerly Centre Seniors' Club)
Pinecrest Seniors' Club
The Giuseppe Garibaldi Seniors' Club
Sonoma Heights Seniors' Club
Thornhill Senior Citizens Club
Villa Giardino (Maple)

Over the course of the meeting the following strategic goals and objectives were discussed and endorsed by the groups.

The goals of the Seniors Strategy are:

1. To identify, recommend and establish a more comprehensive program to the delivery of services for Vaughan seniors;
2. To improve the quality of life for senior citizens;
3. To reduce isolation and promote social interaction;
4. To strengthen friendships and community connectedness;
5. To identify opportunities to enhance the health and well-being of older adults and seniors through recreation programs and services.

The objectives of the Seniors Strategy are:

1. To create the Seniors Association of Vaughan Inc. (S.A.V.I.) with representation from senior clubs and groups in Vaughan.
2. To organize one meeting a year with the executive of S.A.V.I and members of Council, elected Provincial and Federal members and school trustees to discuss and dialogue on issues and interests of seniors;
3. To plan and execute an annual citywide seniors festival "Seniorfest" B.B.Q with special activities such as bingo, cards, bocce, etc.;
4. To host an annual Seniors Information Day;
5. To recognize the contributions made by seniors citizens in the community;
6. To develop a comprehensive plan that will include identifying the needs and preferences of seniors for the delivery of leisure programs and services managed by the Recreation and Culture Department.

After considerable discussion and feedback a vote was taken and the goals and objectives were approved. Discussion then ensued to identify those who would be representing each club on the board of S.A.V.I. To date the following people have agreed to service on the board:

Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors' Club

- Maria-Eva Cristante
- Filippo Ferri

East Woodbridge Seniors' Club

- Giulia Zinni

- Domenic Losito

West Woodbridge Seniors' Club

- Michele Saraceni
- Joe Napoli

The Giuseppe Garibaldi Seniors' Club

- Gabriele DeLuca
- Domenico Caravaggio

Pine York Seniors' Club

- Caroline Donadio
- Isabella Ferrara

Sonoma Heights Seniors' Club

- Mario Biordi
- Lina Tolone

Thornhill Senior Citizens' Club

- Shadi aLal Bhatla
- Som Kath Sharma

Garnet Williams Seniors' Club

- Al Froom
- Molly Franklin

The Board will continue to identify and encourage participation of various seniors' groups in Vaughan to ensure it reflects the diverse cultural diversity of the community. Those that were not able to attend the meeting will be contacted for their input and referral of their representatives.

It was agreed that a meeting of the Board would take place during the months of June, July and August to plan and organize the first Seniorfest BBQ, tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2004 between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. A commitment was also made to request time at a City of Vaughan Working Session for the executive of S.A.V.I. to attend and dialogue with Members of Council along with an invitation to the local MPs and MPPs to attend. A tentative date was agreed to, that being, November, 2004.

Conclusion

As part of the strategic planning review process in January, 2004, Members of Council agreed to look into the potential of developing a seniors' strategy that would provide direction and support on the delivery of services to older adults in the City of Vaughan. One of the first steps in the development of the strategy was the creation of a Seniors Information Day and the establishment of the Seniors Association of Vaughan Inc. (S.A.V.I.) In addition, the development of goals and objectives for the Seniors Strategy have been created and adopted by the S.A.V.I. Over the months ahead work will be undertaken to develop a strategy to better serve the senior constituents of the City of Vaughan.

Attachments

None

Report Prepared By

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri

Respectfully Submitted

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri