

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET) – JANUARY 18, 2005

RESPONSE TO DEPUTATIONS SENIORS ISSUES AND SERVICES THE SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF VAUGHAN THE GARNET WILLIAMS SENIORS VILLA GIARDINO – MAPLE RESIDENTS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION), NOVEMBER 23, 2004

Recommendation

The City Manager, in consultation with the Senior Management Team, recommends that this report BE RECEIVED.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to the issues raised by a number of Senior's Groups that appeared on deputation at the November 23, 2004 Committee of the Whole (Working Session).

Background – Analysis and Options

a) Origin

On November 23, 2004, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) heard deputations from the Seniors Association of Vaughan Inc. (S.A.V.I.), the residents of Villa Giardino – Maple and the Garnet Williams Seniors. The deputations dealt with seniors' issues and services. In response to the deputations, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) adopted the following motion:

- 1) That the following deputations and written submissions be received:
 - a) Ms. Maria Eva Crisante, SAVI, 88 Fieldgate Drive, Maple, L6A 1K9, and written submission dated November 23, 2004;
 - b) Mr. Tony Piarulli, Villa Giardino Seniors Group, 2502/2504/2506 Rutherford Road, L4K 5N6, and written submission dated, dated November 23, 2004; and
 - c) Mr. Allan Froom, Garnet Williams Seniors, 7601 Bathurst Street, Apt. #1201, Thornhill, L4J 4H5, and written submission dated November 23, 2004; and
- 2) That staff prepare a comprehensive list of all proposals made by the three deputants, including any other matters identified, to the Clerk, by SAVI or its members' clubs before December 6, 2004 and that each proposal be referred to the appropriate department for detailed comments.
- 3) That comments include policy and procedure options for consideration by Council at a future Committee of the Whole meeting, not later than March 31, 2005; and
- 4) That the written submission of SAVI, be received.

Council ratified this motion Council on December 6, 2004.

On January 11, 2005, Budget Committee adopted the following motion.

The Budget Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the Special Committee of the Whole (Budget) meeting of January 18, 2005, for a comprehensive

report addressing all the deputation requests made by S.A.V.I. at the November 23, 2004 Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting.

This report has been prepared in response to the direction of Budget Committee.

b) Report Format

The three seniors groups each provided separate written submissions in conjunction with their oral deputations. The issues raised have been grouped by thematic area. Examples include: "Public Transit" and "Facilities". Responses have been prepared on an issue-by-issue basis. The issues list and the responses are set out below.

c) Compilation of Issues Identified in Deputations
The Seniors Association of Vaughan Inc. (S.A.V.I.)
Villa Giardino - Maple
Garnet Williams Seniors
Committee of the Whole Working Session
November 23, 2004

1. Facilities

- **More money be made available and attributed to furnishings for seniors rooms on an "as needed" basis;**

***Response:** Depending on the extent of the furnishings that are required, new items may be requested through the capital budget process. Money has been requested in the 2005 capital budget to assist. No additional funds have been allocated in the operating budget for 2005. Staff checks furnishings at each location annually and will continue to submit capital requests as needed. Seniors' Clubs are encouraged to fundraise to assist the City in reducing costs whenever possible.*

- **There be more City Staff support to assist in the operation of the clubs and in the organization of additional programs and services;**

***Response:** Staff resources are allocated to assist the 15 clubs in the City along with implementing various senior programs. The Recreation and Culture department is in the process of implementing a reorganization, which will provide a greater presence in the community in order to support seniors' clubs. The necessary staff resources have been identified as part of the Recreation and Culture Reorganization for 2005.*

In 2004 S.A.V.I. undertook three very successful initiatives as part of the seniors' strategy. The initiatives included:

- *The Seniors Information Day, June 2, 2004 as part of Seniors Month;*
- *Seniorsfest held on September 12, 2004 and;*
- *Seniors' Summit held on November 23, 2004.*

Over 1,200 seniors attended the various events. Many expressed an interest in seeing these events and/or similar activities that encourage social, recreational and educational opportunities for seniors. In order to continue to support the volunteer efforts of the S.A.V.I. staff request \$2,500 for administrative and event planning costs. All events in 2004 had event sponsors but some costs cannot be absorbed through sponsorship.

- **Villa Giardino seniors request the City's support and assistance in the completion and approval of their application for Community Service Organization Status, in**

order to have access to services and facilities provided by the City and to be part of the seniors' network;

Response: Recreation and Culture staff will review the request.

- **Garnet Williams Seniors request that future locations be built larger and Seniors' clubs be consulted on room space requirements before construction, in response to room size constraints limiting the number members that they may enrol;**

Response: Staff has noted this concern for future planning and will review the present programming space requirements and scheduling with the club.

- **Garnet Williams Seniors are requesting advice as to a contact person who they could refer inquiries to about seniors' clubs and programs, particularly for inquiries from the Chinese and Russian communities.**

Response: The contact person for new seniors' clubs is Domenic Colallilo, Program Manager, Recreation and Culture Department at 905 832-8500, ext. 8356.

Responding Department(s)

- Recreation and Culture

2. City Policies

- **Maintain consistency in policies for the operation of each club and enforce them;**

Response: The Recreation and Culture Department is revising a document entitled: "City of Vaughan Seniors' Clubs Operating Guidelines", which will assist clubs in their operation and management. Once the draft document is finalized, seniors' clubs will be invited to provide comments before it goes to Council for approval. An orientation session will follow with club executives along with S.A.V.I. member representatives.

- **The clubs should be consulted and provide input when amendments or changes to senior program fees and policies are made.**

Response: The Recreation and Culture Department is undertaking a user fee study in 2005. Seniors' clubs representatives will be consulted. Seniors' Clubs are consulted when changes are made to various policies (i.e. Bocce Policy)

Responding Department(s)

- Recreation and Culture

3. Snow Removal

- **Request that the City decrease the amount of time that it takes to remove windrows once the plough clears the snow;**

Response: The amount of time between the road plough and the windrow-clearing machine varies with the amount and type of snowfall. During very heavy snowfalls, as was recently experienced on December 23, 2004, the windrows left by the ploughs are heavy and take longer to clear. During lighter snowfalls, the machines can keep up with the ploughs more easily, and the delay between the plough and the windrow unit is usually between 3-4 hours. In comparison, when the City provided windrow clearing for only those who were approved to be on the list as a result of medical documentation, the

time between the plough and the windrow being cleared was permitted to be up to 48 hours after the storm.

In order to improve the delay time any more than the current amount, additional equipment would need to be hired. Depending on the contractor involved, each additional unit required could cost up to \$24,000 in standby costs per season, excluding the hourly operating costs. Once the number of windrow units starts to exceed that of snow ploughs, co-ordination becomes a significant problem, and may result in more missed streets and driveways. As such, it is recommended that the current ratio of one windrow unit per residential snow- plough be maintained.

- **Villa Giardino requests the City's assistance in the removal of snow on the main road between the Sports Village and their residence.**

Response: The ploughing of the road between the Sports Village and Villa Giardino is done through an agreement on title between the City and Villa Giardino – Maple, with a 50/50 cost sharing agreement. A private contractor is currently performing winter maintenance. The maintenance agreement contains the same service level standards as the City has for its public roadways. As the cost for this service is covered in a formal agreement, the City is providing assistance with snow clearing services on this roadway.

Responding Department(s)

- Public Works

4. Land Development

- **Supports the expansion of regional roads prior to subdivision approval, in response to the gridlock that, "dominates our roads and it is difficult and frustrating to travel from one point to another".**

Response: The current process for the review and approval of new development does include a review of the timing of the expansion of the Regional road system. At the Block Plan stage requirements for the Regional road upgrades are identified and translated to conditions of approval for Draft Plans of Subdivision. This process over the last few years has resulted in several Regional Road projects being advanced from the originally planned schedule and will result in road improvements being completed before homes in the new development areas (Blocks 11, 12, 18 & 33W) are occupied. The same process will be applied as new development areas are proposed for development.

- **Crossing lights on main roads need to be adjusted to allow more time for pedestrian crossing, citing Jane and Major Mackenzie and Melville and Major Mackenzie as two of many examples. The Garnet Williams Seniors suggest better synchronization of the traffic lights and more advanced greens.**

Response: Pedestrian crossing signals on main roads as referenced above are under the jurisdiction of the Region of York. Average walking rates are used to determine the time required to cross the roadway. Total "Walk" time provided is the total of the steady white "walk" indication and the flashing amber "don't walk" indication. Generally, if a pedestrian pushes the walk call button and steps off the curb before the flashing don't walk indication, there will be enough time provided to cross the road at normal walking rates. In areas where there are a significant number of seniors who require more time to cross the road, limited additional time can be provided. These areas should be brought to the attention of the Region of York. If a pedestrian does not push the walk call button, less walk indication time is provided.

Responding Department(s)

- Public Works

5. Waste Management

- **Reinstate twice a week garbage pick-up during the summer months;**

Response: *Twice per week summer waste collection was eliminated in 2004, at a savings of over \$450,000. In addition to the financial savings, this move brought the City into line with the waste collection frequencies of other municipalities in Ontario, and was a positive step to make residents consider recycling more thoroughly as an option for handling their waste materials. As the current waste collection contracts have been approved at the 2004 levels of service, twice per week waste collection is not an option at this time.*

- **Institute weekly recycling pick-up;**

Response: *Through the 2005 Operating Budget process, staff has identified approximately \$600,000 in additional funds required to provide weekly recycling collection for the latter portion of the year. As has been reported previously, any change to the frequency of recycling collection would need to be tied into the opening of the Region's new Materials Recovery Facility due to the lack of available 5 sort recycling trucks. This new facility is expected to open July 2005.*

- **Confirm our own long-term waste disposal plan for York Region;**

Response: *In terms of long term disposal plans, the Regional Municipality of York, by virtue of the Municipal Act 2001, has the jurisdictional authority and mandate to provide waste disposal for the area municipalities in the Region, not the City of Vaughan. In this regard, the Region has contracted with a number of landfills in Canada and the U.S. to handle its waste for the next number of years. In addition to contracting for landfill capacity, they have contracted with a processing facility in Newmarket to handle the Source Separated Organic wastes (SSO's) that will be collected through the upcoming three-stream "Green Bin" program. The Region is also looking at entertaining pilot projects with private companies in an effort to test new and emerging technologies in order to reduce the dependency on landfill.*

- **Request that the waste collection companies ensure that all refuse and recycling material be picked-up and that no garbage be left on the property and/or road.**

Response: *A significant part of the problem concerning waste and recycling materials being left on the road is in how the materials are set out for collection. Lighter materials, like paper and plastic bottles, are easily blown from the blue boxes and open topped garbage containers during windy days, and often this mess is wrongly attributed to "careless" collection workers. While the City has spoken with its contractors about the quality of their work, the contractors' employees are not required to, nor are they paid to, clean up materials that are blown about the streets as a result of the weather and how the materials are placed out for collection. To help educate residents on how to set out materials for collection, the City asks residents to bundle their papers, tie them together (or place in an open topped plastic or paper bag), and place them inside the blue box for collection. For those residents who have more than the average amount of materials to set out for collection, the City sells additional blue boxes to its residents for the nominal cost of \$5 per blue box.*

Responding Department(s)

- Public Works

6. Sign Regulation

- **Institute a sign removal program to eliminate unauthorized signs throughout the City and charges should be laid where possible to deter violators.**

***Response:** Enforcement Services conducts targeted initiatives on signs several times each year. This is on top of the 24 hours per week expended on sign enforcement. A report will be coming forward in February outlining the results of the latest blitz and potential new initiatives aimed at reducing the number of illegal placard and ground signs.*

Responding Department(s)

- Enforcement Services

7. Taxes

- **Request that taxes be kept low to minimize burden on seniors so as not to effect lifestyle changes;**

***Response:** To assist the City's seniors and minimize the property tax burden, the City does provide an annual grant to those in most need. A senior property owner that has been a resident in Vaughan for at least one year and receives the Federal Guaranteed Income Supplement is eligible to receive a credit of \$225.00 from the City of Vaughan towards their property taxes.*

To further assist seniors, the Region of York has a tax deferral program for those seniors that meet the Region's criteria. This program permits an interest free deferral of property tax due to reassessment and therefore maintains the level of taxation for each year. The deferred property taxes are repaid only when the property is transferred or sold to someone other than a spouse.

- **Request that City Council approach the Provincial Government to review the legislation governing the education portion of the property tax, with the objective of reducing the portion that the senior taxpayers absorb.**

***Response:** In September of 2004, the City's Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services, Mr. Clayton Harris, made a presentation to the Canadian Property Tax Association requesting support for the removal of education funding from property taxation. In 2004 education funding represented 28.7% of your residential property tax bill.*

Councillor Peter Meffe introduced a resolution at the December 14, 2004 Budget Committee meeting requesting the Province to review services currently funded from property taxes. This includes education funding.

Responding Department(s)

- Finance and Corporate Services

8. Recreational Facilities

- **Revise user fees for fitness centres, aquatic programs, bocce and other seniors' programs with a view to making them more affordable.**

Response: At the present time we already discount memberships and programs for seniors. Many of the seniors' programs and services do not recover the direct operating costs. A user fee study will take place in 2005, which will identify gaps and opportunities to make changes to future user fees. Community groups such as S.A.V.I. will be invited to participate in the public feedback meetings. At this time we do not recommend reductions in fees until we review the findings of the User Fee Study and present recommendations to Council for their consideration.

Responding Department(s)

- Recreation and Culture

9. Hospital for the City of Vaughan

- **Strongly support action to have a hospital in the City of Vaughan. Healthcare is a major issue with seniors and the realization of a hospital in Vaughan would provide an improved service for seniors as well as the community at large.**

Response: Through the initiative of Council, the City is actively pursuing a health-care facility for the City of Vaughan through the Vaughan Health-Care Facility Study Task Force. The Task Force has initiated the preparation of the Vaughan Health-Care Facility Planning and Implementation Study and it is nearing completion. The study demonstrates that there is a need for a health-care facility in the city, in the form of a community hospital. It suggests that the hospital could also provide a specialized focus on Geriatrics and chronic disease management, in response to Vaughan's growing seniors population. The purpose of the study is to provide the basis for a request to the Ministry of Health and Long Term for its support to proceed with the planning and development processes for the health-care facility. Currently, it is expected that the request will be made to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care by the end of February 2005.

Responding Department(s)

- City Manager's Office

10. Transit

- **Request that the City assist the seniors at Villa Giardino in obtaining a shuttle bus to provide transportation to the Maple Health Centre, York Central Hospital, Fortino's Plaza, etc.**

Response: Transit is the responsibility of the Region of York through York Rapid Transit (YRT). Such a request would need to be directed to the Region.

- **Villa Giardino residents would like a bus shelter on the north side of Rutherford Road;**

Response: Bus shelters are also the responsibility of YRT. A request for a bus shelter would need to be submitted to YRT for its approval and action. The request will be evaluated by YRT on the basis of its criteria, to determine if it is warranted.

Responding Department(s)

- Engineering

Conclusion

In accordance with the direction of the Budget Committee, staff have prepared a report addressing the requests made by the Seniors' organizations on deputation at the November 23, 2004 Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting. It is recommended that the report be received and that Committee provide staff with any necessary direction in respect of the disposition of these matters.

Attachments

N/A

Report Prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

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