

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MAY 29, 2006

**RESPONSE TO DEPUTATIONS
S.A.V.I. (SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF VAUGHAN INITIATIVE) ET AL
SENIORS' ISSUES AND SERVICES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: NOVEMBER 21, 2005**

Recommendation

The City Manager, in consultation with the Senior Management Team recommends that this report BE RECEIVED and be forwarded to all Vaughan Seniors' Organizations for information purposes, York Region Transit and the York Region Transportation and Works Department;

Economic Impact

There will be no economic impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the issues raised in correspondence submitted to the City in conjunction with deputations by several Vaughan Seniors' Organizations.

Background – Analysis and Options

a) Origin

On November 21, 2005 Committee of the Whole heard deputations from the representatives of a number of Seniors' Organizations, which identified issues that concern Vaughan's seniors' community. Also submitted was correspondence itemizing the issues. The list arises from a survey of fourteen seniors' clubs conducted by the Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (S.A.V.I.). The responses were consolidated into a single document for the purposes of the presentation to Committee of the Whole. In addition, the correspondence also speaks to S.A.V.I.'s accomplishments in the past year (2005) and its plans for 2006. (See Attachment No. 1)

In response to the deputations, Committee of the Whole adopted the following motion:

- 1) That the deputation of Ms. Isabella Ferrara, Chair, Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (S.A.V.I.), and written submissions dated October 12, 2005 and November 21, 2005, be received and referred to staff for a report reviewing the list of issues identified to a future meeting; and
- 2) That the following deputations be received:
 - a) Mr. Shadi Lal Bhatla, Co-Chair of the Summit Committee; and
 - b) Ms Maria Eva Crisante, President, Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club.

Committee of the Whole's recommendation was ratified by Council on November 28, 2005. This report has been prepared in response to Council's direction.

b) Report Format

This report provides comments on the issues identified in the written submission, as referenced above. The issues are listed below in their order of appearance, with an individual response to each.

c) Issues Identified in Deputant's Correspondence from the Committee of the Whole Meeting, November 21, 2005

1. **We 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 improved service for seniors as well as all the community of Vaughan.**

Response: Progress is being made on securing a health care facility for the City of Vaughan. The Vaughan Health Care Foundation has the responsibility for the planning of the facility and obtaining the necessary approvals. It is proceeding on a number of fronts. It is working with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to further the Vaughan Health "Campus Care" concept. It is also working with the Ministry to obtain a Community Health Centre for the City of Vaughan. A Community Health Centre focuses on the delivery of primary care and related services like illness prevention and wellness programs. The Foundation has recently opened an office; it is actively searching for a site for the Campus of Care; and fundraising is continuing. (Responding Department: City Manager's Office)

2. **Popular seniors programs are increased based on the request by the individual groups.**

Response: The Department of Recreation and Culture's Active Living Coordinators work closely with the older adult clubs in their communities to support programmes and initiatives that meet the needs of the participants. Seniors programs are reviewed and modified by the Senior's clubs based on the club's needs and available resources. The Recreation and Culture department will work with the clubs to identify and expand programs where facilities and resources are available. (Reporting Department: Recreation and Culture)

3. **The City undertakes a study to establish a reduced fee structure for seniors participating in City programs.**

Response: The Department of Recreation and Culture has undertaken a comprehensive review of its programme fees. A final report, Pricing Policy and 2006/2007 Fee Schedule, was submitted for City Council approval in December 2005. Fees for programmes such as aquafitness and recreational swimming for older adults will be reduced effective September 2006. (ie. Seniors Aquafitness present rate - \$203.00 reduced to \$162.40 + GST) (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

4. **The City purchase and make available a large tent on an as needed basis to clubs who hold outside events during the summer months.**

Response: The Department of Recreation and Culture requested in the 2006 budget a large tent to support the older adult clubs and community users in the hosting of many outdoor events. However, the requested budget was not approved in the 2006 budget. Staff will continue to work with the clubs to source

out various temporary options. (i.e. Rental of tents, etc.) (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

5. **The City issue more permits for use of neighbourhood and regional parks to be made available for senior events.**

Response: Requests for permits are considered through the Permit Section of the Recreation and Culture Department. First consideration is given to clubs and organizations that have submitted their 'Facility Request Form' by the due date. The due date for summer requests is the first Friday in January and the due date for Fall/Winter/Spring requests is the first Friday in March. Requests for permits received after the due date will be considered as space is available. Staff will continue to work with various clubs to support them in their efforts to find suitable parks for their events. However, staff are not aware of any older adult groups in 2005/2006 where the appropriate park space has not been available for their event. (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

6. **That the City build more multi-purpose Community Centres which will house a library, schools, recreational, daycare and senior centres.**

Response: The Department of Recreation and Culture in collaboration with many city departments along with Vaughan Public Libraries is undertaking a Master Plan that will include a review of the demand and need for new multi-purpose recreation facilities. (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

7. **That the City review and increase the \$500 yearly grant in light of the increase of the seniors members in each of the clubs. This \$500 was approved many years ago and has not been increased.**

Response: The City of Vaughan provides a small grant of \$500/year for some operating support for each club. Clubs should also recognize that thousands of dollars each year are spent in operational costs to provide seniors rooms in community centres, leased storefronts and space in other city buildings for clubs to offer activities for their members. While we appreciate that additional grant monies would be of assistance, we encourage groups to continue to look at other revenue sources to support their activities (i.e. membership dues, fundraising, donations etc.) (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

8. **YRT Mobility should be expanded as well as available upon request to large groups for purposes of transportation to shopping malls or community centres.**

Response: The purpose of York Region Transit's Mobility Plus service is to provide door-to-door accessible public transit service for people with disabilities. Mobility Plus service is intended for people who are unable to use conventional public transit due to a functional disability. In order to use the service, customers must register and meet specific eligibility criteria. Eligibility is evaluated on a case by case basis.

However, if a group was planning an outing, York Region Transit does offer charter services to the general public. Discounted charter rates are available if the charter is arranged through a registered non-profit community group. In addition, reduced charter rates are also offered to the local municipalities. As

such, the municipality may book on behalf of a group or groups. A charter request form and further details on this service are available at <http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/downloads/charter.pdf>. (Responding Department: City Manager's Office in consultation with York Region Transit)

9. Streets should be cleaned more readily of winter salt and sand accumulation.

Response: The City's annual spring street sweeping program commences mid-April each year. This timing is based on historical information concerning the number of snowfalls that have taken place in early April. Performing City-wide street-sweeping prior to mid-April may result in a significant waste of time and funds, if a late season snowfall occurred.

Once the spring clean-up has taken place, the City operates two of its own sweepers that maintain the streets up until the first frost occurs in the fall.

It is important to note that the City no longer uses sand in any of its de-icing mixes used on urban roads. This change has resulted in less material to clean up at the end of the season, less silting of catch basins, streams and watercourses, and, less particulate matter in the air, thereby improving air quality. (Responding Department: Public Works)

10. Though we acknowledge the City of Vaughan in exempting the late penalty charges in the tax bill, our needs would be better addressed if the City were to petition the Province to eliminate the education portion of the taxes to those over the age of 65.

Response: The City of Vaughan has previously taken a position on what services should be funded from property taxes. Resolutions have been passed with respect to removing funding from property taxation for some social services such as education. In addition, Council has also passed a resolution to discontinue GTA Pooling. GTA Pooling takes tax dollars collected in the GTA, including the City of Vaughan and forwards these funds to the City of Toronto to fund their programs. Approximately \$35m is collected in Vaughan and forwarded to the City of Toronto annually. Vaughan and others believe this should stop. (Responding Department: Finance)

11. Reduce or cap utilities within the City jurisdiction and request PowerStream and Enbridge Gas to reduce or cap these monthly charges for seniors.

Response: The setting of these utility rates is regulated by the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). There are strict requirements for setting utility rates.

One of the objectives of the OEB is to protect consumers. Comments from the public are permitted at rate hearings. Submissions regarding utility rates can only be made at the time the utility submits a rate application for approval. PowerStream has just completed their rate filing and there will be a reduction in rates. (Responding Department: Finance)

12. That the parking lot servicing Maple Italian Pioneer Seniors Club be expanded to accommodate the growing number of seniors.

Response: A review is underway with the Building and Facilities Department to assess the parking requirements at the Merino Road facility. (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

13. That the space at Pine York Seniors Club facility be renovated and/or relocated to accommodate the growing number of senior members.

Response: In April, 2006 Council approved the relocation of the Pine York Seniors Club to a new location and larger facility. Arrangements are underway with the Building and Facilities and Recreation and Culture departments to facilitate the move with the club. (Responding Department: Recreation and Culture)

Items Addressed Last Year but not Resolved

1. The shuttle bus addressed by Villa Giardino seniors on our November 23, 2004 deputation was not resolved and we request the City to approach the Region to resubmit the request for 2006.

Response: Transit is the responsibility of the Region of York through York Region Transit (YRT). On April 25, 2006 Staff from York Region Transit provided Committee of the Whole (Working Session) with a presentation on YRT's draft 2006-2010 Five-Year Service Plan. The provision of "Community Bus Services" in the City was one of the matters that were discussed. Community Bus Services are defined as fully accessible transit services typically designed for seniors and people with disabilities who can use fully accessible conventional transit. Rather than follow conventional routing patterns, they are designed to provide better access to facilities such as seniors' residences, medical offices, community centres and shopping areas.

The issue of the earlier Villa Giardino request was raised at the meeting. York Region Transit Staff expressed a willingness to further explore the provision of this type of service in the Maple area. YRT Staff indicated that they would need to meet with the proponents of the service to determine issues relating to service levels and the facilities/areas to be served. Such information will allow YRT to take the necessary steps to plan the service and proceed through the budgeting and approvals processes.

This report will be forwarded to York Region Transit for its records. To initiate this process it is suggested that Irene McNeil, Manager of Service Planning at York Region Transit be contacted by the proponent. (Responding Department: City Manager's Office in consultation with York Region Transit)

2. Crossing lights – we would like this request considered again this year as it is of great concern to our senior members. We notice that York Region has installed crossing signals with a count down system at the Jane and Major Mackenzie intersection. We would like the City to consider installing the same system at other major intersections where there is a high volume of pedestrians crossing Highway #7 and Pine Valley and Highway #7 and Islington Avenue.

Response: In last year's submission, S.A.V.I. indicated that the traffic signals on main roads need to be adjusted to allow more time for pedestrian crossing, citing the Jane and Major Mackenzie and the Melville and Major Mackenzie intersections as two of many examples. The response at that time pointed out that the referenced intersections are under the jurisdiction of the Region of York and that any such conditions need to be brought to the attention of the Region.

It was also indicated that 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 is a significant number of seniors who require more time to cross the road, limited additional time can be provided. If a pedestrian does not push the walk call button, less walk indication time is provided.

The roads and intersections identified above (Highway # 7, Pine Valley Drive and Islington Avenue) are Regional responsibilities and are not under the City's jurisdiction. The Region is currently conducting a pilot program using the countdown pedestrian signalling system at a limited number of locations. At this stage the Region is not taking requests for the retrofitting of existing signals or providing the technology when there are new installations. Typically, the Regional roads are major arterials, which are the widest, have the heaviest traffic flows and most turning movements. These roads would benefit the most from having more pedestrian-friendly traffic signals. On roads that are under the City's jurisdiction, a retrofit program that would see the installation of the countdown or the "chirping" signal systems is not yet in place. The use of these technologies could be considered when new signals are installed. The Region of York should be advised of the favourable response that the countdown system is receiving. This report should be forwarded to the Region of York (Transportation and Works Department) as an indication of public support for the further deployment of this system and other pedestrian-friendly traffic-control measures. (Responding Department: Engineering Services)

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

Responding to public feedback is supportive of the Vaughan Vision objective of achieving service excellence through the effective and efficient delivery of services.

Conclusion

In accordance with the direction of Council, staff have prepared a report addressing the requests made by the Seniors' organizations on deputation at the November 21, 2005 Committee of the Whole meeting. It is recommended that the report be received and be forwarded to all Vaughan Senior Citizens' Organizations, York Region Transit and the York Region Transportation and Works Department for their information.

Attachments

1. S.A.V.I. Correspondence from November 21, 2005 (Deputation Content)

Report Prepared by:

Roy McQuillin, Manager of Corporate Policy, ext. 8211

Respectfully submitted,

Michael DeAngelis
City Manager

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DEPUTATION TO CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORKING SESSION
NOVEMBER 21, 2005

Your Worship, Mr. Chair and Members of Council:

Good afternoon. My name is Isabella Ferrara and I am the Chair of the Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (S.A.V.I.) that represents the collective voice of 2,580 senior club members of the City of Vaughan.

We thank you for the opportunity you have given us to present our deputation today. We also acknowledge the help and support that we continually receive from the Members of Council and the staff of the Department of Recreation and Culture.

What SA VI has accomplished in one year:

- Seniors Symposium and Exhibition on June 14 held at the Terrace Banquet Hall, attracted 298. It brought seniors awareness to health and safety.
- Second Annual Seniorfest on September 18 held at the Veneto Centre brought together 1100 seniors who participated in: tournaments, entertainment, lunch and snacks. Seniors also helped raise 44 bins of non perishable food to the Vaughan Food Bank.
- Worked on a Summit which is being presented here today.
- Holiday Concert is being held at December 21, 2005 at 7:30 pm at Woodbridge Memorial Arena community room.

Report Card

Following our deputation presented to this Council on November 23, 2004 we have noted that many of the recommendations and concerns have been improved or completely rectified, in particular:

- The City has requested its contractors to reduce the time between plowing the roads and clearing the windrows.
- Weekly recycling program has been re-instated.

As well, several of our seniors clubs have received much needed improvements to their existing facilities; three of the clubs were renovated and one other was relocated to an entirely new location. These improvements will encourage better use of the facilities and the implementation of additional programs, for this we extend you our heartfelt thanks.

Good afternoon Your Worship, Mr. Chair and Members of Council:

While we are grateful for the many services available to us and the assistance and support of this Council and the City of Vaughan staff, we note that from the results of the survey, many of our members requested the following:

1. We 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 improved service for seniors as well as all the community of Vaughan.
2. Popular seniors programs are increased based on the request by the individual groups.
3. The City undertakes a study to establish a reduced fee structure for seniors participating in City programs.
4. City purchase and make available a large tent on as needed basis to clubs who hold outside events during the summer months.
5. The City issue more permits for use of neighborhood and regional parks to be made available for senior events.
6. That the City build more multi-purpose Community Centres which will house a library, schools, recreational, daycare and senior centres.
7. That the City review and increase the \$500 yearly grant in light of the increase of the seniors members in each of the clubs. This \$500 was approved many years ago and has not been increased.
8. YRT Mobility should be expanded as well as available upon request to large groups for purposes of transportation to shopping mall or community centres.
9. Streets should be cleaned more readily of winter salt and sand accumulation.
10. Though we acknowledge the assistance of the City of Vaughan in exempting the late penalty charges on the tax bill, our needs would be better addressed if the City were to petition the Province to eliminate the education portion of the taxes to those over the age of 65.
11. Reduce or cap utilities within the City jurisdiction and request PowerStream and Enbridge Gas to reduce or cap these monthly charges for seniors.
12. That the parking lot servicing Maple Italian Pioneer Seniors Club be expanded to accommodate the growing numbers of seniors.

13. That the space at Pine York Seniors Club facility be renovated and/or relocated to accommodate the growing number of senior members.

Items which were addressed last year but not resolved:

1. The shuttle bus addressed by Villa Giardino seniors on our November 23, 2004 deputation was not resolved and we request the City to approach the Region to resubmit this request for 2006.
2. Crossing lights – we would like this request considered again this year as it is of great concern to our seniors members. We notice that York Region has installed crossing signals with a count down system at Jane and Major Mackenzie intersection. We would like the City to consider installing the same system to other major intersection where there is a high volume of pedestrians crossing Highway #7 and Pine Valley, Highway #7 and Islington Road.

SAVI will also be arranging to meet with Provincial and Federal representatives to bring concerns with them that are within their jurisdiction.

Thank you for your indulgence. We have faith that our collective voice will not go unheard or unheeded by this Council and we will continue to trust in the effectiveness of this municipal process.

This is what is proposed in 2006

- An on going food drive for Vaughan Food Bank
- Fundraising for worthy causes such as: health care service, a new hospital.
- The City of Vaughan, the City above Toronto, which is true to its name, would like to declare and make it official the second Sunday in September as Grandparents Day. All clubs to participate in the celebration, and promote throughout the City of Vaughan having retailers offer special discounts for seniors 15% off during that day.
- Organize an Inter-Generational Summit – a joint SAVI/Youth Cabinet Summit whereby it would promote inter-generational activities and events, such as family night and the role grand parents have in their family.
- Establish a “Golden Age” Volunteer Recognition Program, offering annual recognition of volunteers within all seniors clubs and in all sectors.
- Explore the possibility of a Senior Variety and Talent Night - offering an annual showcase of seniors’ talent.
- Enhance a library afternoon having a senior tell stories to the children during pre-school story time.
- Establish a seniors’ ‘Library of Memory’- gather recipes, family genealogical roots.

Isabella Ferrara
Chair, Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative
(S.A.V.I.)

November 21, 2005

The deputation which is being presented here today was compiled from the results of a survey that was distributed to each of the seniors clubs for completion. We would especially like to acknowledge the help and support which we received from Art Mastantuono and Domenic Colalilo, who helped facilitate this process by attending meetings and assisting in the completion and collection of the surveys.

The main concerns raised by our members through this survey, will be presented by the Co-Chair of the Summit Committee, Mr. Shadi Lal Bhatla.