

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MAY 29, 2006

CITY OF VAUGHAN HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

1. That Council receives this report for information purposes.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact to the City of Vaughan for the 2006 budget year as the necessary resources are allocated and approved as part of the operating budget.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the Healthy Community Initiative.

Background - Analysis and Options

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 22, 2003, Council requested that staff investigate and report on the Healthy Community Initiative.

The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition is a non-profit organization with a mission to work with the diverse communities of Ontario to strengthen their social, environmental and economic well being. Healthy Communities are based on the principle that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health and are inter-related. People cannot achieve their fullest potential unless they are able to take control of those things that determine their well-being. All sectors of the community are inter-related and share their knowledge, expertise and perspectives, working together to create a healthy community.

A Healthy Community includes community members and representatives of community groups and organizations, service providers (health and social), local business, and government facilities and services.

A Healthy Community process involves:

- wide community participation;
- broad involvement of all sectors of the community;
- local government commitment; and
- creation of healthy public policies.

Qualities of a Healthy Community include:

- clean and safe physical environment;
- peace, equity and social justice;
- adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all;
- adequate access to health care services;
- opportunities for learning and skill development;
- strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks;
- workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being;
- wide participation of residents in decision-making;
- strong local cultural and spiritual heritage;

- diverse and vital economy;
- protection of the natural environment; and
- responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability.

Applying the Principles of Healthy Communities to the City of Vaughan

Vaughan's Vision is "Citizens first through service excellence". In applying the principles of Healthy communities to Vaughan, the City possesses an abundance of opportunities that would deem it a "Healthy Community." The City provides and supports an array of excellent services for its citizens.

- The City of Vaughan has extensive community wide participation through community events, advisory committees of Council, ongoing public meetings and forums to name a few.
- The City of Vaughan involves many sectors of the community in the planning and delivering of services and works extensively with a network of stakeholders, resident groups and the general public.
- The City of Vaughan is committed to the creation of healthy public policies and has recently introduced the Safe Community Centre Policy and the Pesticide Free Vaughan Policy which support public health and safety.
- The City of Vaughan is committed to healthy communities through the delivery of extensive municipal services to the residents of Vaughan.

Examples of City of Vaughan - Healthy Communities

Following is a sample of initiatives that the City of Vaughan is involved with that reflect the qualities that the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition recognize as part of a healthy community. This summary by no means captures all healthy community initiatives that are underway.

Healthy - Environment

Environmentally, within the City of Vaughan there are over 140 parks, 60 km of walking trails and bicycle paths. Within the City of Vaughan boundaries we also have other unique assets such as the Bartley Smith Greenway, William Granger Greenway along with Boyd Conservation and the Kortright Centre. Major City of Vaughan parks such as the Mackenzie Glen District Park have been recognized for its unique award winning design and accessibility amenities through the Parks & Recreation Ontario (PRO).

In addition to parks and open space, successful programs such as the Pesticide Free Vaughan, Public Education Campaigns on the Asian Longhorn Beetle, Anti-Litter as well as community programs such as the Adopt-a-Park and Park Ambassador initiatives foster community pride and involvement. The Greening Vaughan Waste Management Plan encourages community involvement in the reduction of waste to landfill sites. Vaughan's business community has also been active in supporting a cleaner environment through the Vaughan Manufacturers' Sustainability Program.

In 2005, the City of Vaughan a recognized winner in the International Communities in Bloom program which was a major initiative that brought people together; it is a reflection of our culture, our history and our strong sense of community.

Healthy - Culture and Heritage

Culturally, Vaughan's multicultural fabric is supported by diversity and inclusiveness through numerous attractions such as the McMichael Canadian Art Gallery, A.M.I.C.A. Italian Interpretive Centre and the City Playhouse Theatre. The city has three heritage districts, owns 13 heritage

properties and has an inventory of over 800 heritage structures, 50 of which are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Special places such as the Thoreau MacDonald House or the Woodbridge War Memorial Park and Tower are just a few of the many cultural amenities that are unique to Vaughan. Numerous cultural events such as the Woodbridge Italian Festival, Woodbridge Fair, MapleFest, SeniorsFest, Winterfest, Thornhill Village Festival and the Kleinburg Bindertwine Festival all celebrate our community's history, culture and its people.

Healthy Recreation – Access to Services

Vaughan has positioned itself as one of the premiere providers of recreation facilities, sports parks, walking and biking trails, and programming for a wide range of interests. In the fall of 2005 the Recreation and Culture department completed a operational restructuring with the focus on building stronger community capacity and the delivery of recreation programs and services based on the need of residents in local communities.

Following is a sample of the City of Vaughan recreation facilities, programs and services that are provided for in the community or in partnership with various community groups.

- The city operates eight community centres, six arena pads, and eight indoor pools along with offering numerous outdoor water amenities such as eleven splash pads, one wading and outdoor pool. Other facilities to name a few include numerous tennis courts, indoor and outdoor bocce courts.
- Meeting Places are provided for youth through eight drop-in youth rooms and gym programs. Over 2,600 seniors access 16 Seniors Clubs that provide numerous activities for older adults throughout the city.
- City of Vaughan Fitness Centres (4 locations) provide health and wellness programs and fitness equipment some of which supports those with accessibility challenges (i.e., wheelchair accessible equipment).
- Recreational programs for pre-school, children & youth, adults, and seniors in the areas of sports, dance, leadership, self-defense, creative and visual arts, and health & wellness. Recreation & Culture in 2005 provided over 23,000 programming hours for the community.
- Specialty aquatic programs for breast cancer survivors, women only swim to accommodate ethno and cultural diversity along with aquafitness for people with arthritis.
- More than 40 aquatic related programs are offered such as Learn to Swim, Waterart kidz fitness, synchronized diving, water polo, aquatic leadership, aquafitness, recreational swimming, and length/fitness swimming.
- Over 70 community groups provide opportunities such as hockey, soccer, tennis, baseball, figure skating, aquatics, and for persons with Special Olympics.
- Children's programs are designed with the High Five Quality Assurance Standards. Priorities include fostering healthy development in children over 5 principles (Friends, Play, Caring Adult, Mastery and Participation). Programs are operated from a Child First approach.

The City of Vaughan continues to make great strides in developing itself as a "Healthy Community" through the development of policies, programs and services. This is done in collaboration with city staff, community groups and residents.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report highlights some of the Healthy Community Initiatives that exist in the City of Vaughan and support the Vaughan Vision 2007 by placing "Citizens first through service excellence." The necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 22, 2003, Council requested that staff investigate and report on Healthy Community Initiatives. Staff reviewed the philosophy of the Healthy Community initiative as outlined by the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. The City of Vaughan provides opportunities consistent with the Healthy Community principles of physical, mental and social well-being and will continue to support this initiative through the delivery of City Services.

Attachments

None

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Respectfully submitted,

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