

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - FEBRUARY 4, 2008

PARTICIPATION IN EARTH HOUR – MARCH 29, 2008

Recommendation

Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, Regional Councillor Gino Rosati and Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco recommend:

1. That the City of Vaughan participate in Earth Hour on March 29, 2008, a global movement in which people around the world will turn off their lights for one hour as a symbol of taking action against climate change; and,
2. That the Economic & Technology Development Department and Corporate Communications Department, in consultation with PowerStream, will develop a communications plan to publicize the Earth Hour initiative to the City's residents and businesses.

Economic Impact

All activities can be supported through existing budget allocations.

Communications Plan

Information regarding this event will be posted on the City's website and an advertisement will run on the City Page of the local papers. Corporate Communications will promote this initiative through a News Release, upcoming city events and they will engage local media through an official announcement at a Council Meeting. A pamphlet will be sent to the School Boards to be distributed to all City of Vaughan schools, and a piece will be incorporated into any of our own publications. The Economic and Technology Development Department will promote the initiative to local businesses as well.

Letters will be sent to the Chair of York Region, the Premier of Ontario and the Prime Minister of Canada informing them of our participation in this initiative.

Purpose

Building public awareness of energy use is key to moving the Province toward a conservation culture. Earth Hour will be an international demonstration of the power of individuals to create change and promote civic engagement.

Background - Analysis and Options

The lights-out campaign was launched last year in Sydney, Australia. Organizers say 1,950 businesses and government departments and 60,000 households participated. Since most of Australia's electricity is generated by burning coal, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions was equivalent to taking 48,000 cars off the road for an hour.

This year, Earth Hour (<http://www.earthhour.org/>) will be an international demonstration of the power of individuals to create change. Sydney is in again, and the event has expanded to include Toronto; Chicago; Tel Aviv, Haifa, Israel; Manila, Philippines; Suva, Fiji; Christchurch, New Zealand; four Danish cities – Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, and Aalborg; Bangkok, Singapore, and Shanghai. The City of Toronto has committed to this challenge and all major Civic Centres, including City Hall and Metro Hall will participate in this event.

As of January 23, 2008 17 cities in seven countries have indicated they will also participate. In Canada, Toronto, Markham, Mississauga, Pickering, Newmarket, Brampton and York Region have indicated that they are considering participating or will participate.

Earth Hour is not about solving the climate change: it's about people expressing concern and an intention to do something about it.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

Lead and Promote Environmental Sustainability.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

York Region has indicated they will also be participating in this initiative.

Conclusion

Participating in the Earth Hour initiative on March 29th, 2008 at 8pm will demonstrate the City of Vaughan's ongoing commitment to promoting and practicing environmentally responsible behaviour. Vaughan will be joining a growing number of GTA municipalities who have expressed their interest in participating.

Working with PowerStream will provide both technical and promotional support. PowerStream will be able to access the impact on electrical demand, which will provide the public with an indication of the potential benefits of a minor behavioural change on their energy usage.

Attachments

1. Earth Hour Backgrounder
2. Excerpt from January 24, 2008 York Regional Council Minutes

Report prepared by:

Anita Micoli, Council Executive Assistant
Enza Barbieri, Council Executive Assistant
Joy Ciafardoni, Council Executive Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Frustaglio
Regional Councillor

Gino Rosati
Regional Councillor

Sandra Yeung Racco
Councillor, Ward 4

MINUTES OF COUNCIL – JANUARY 24, 2008**OTHER BUSINESS****13 MOTION****Climate Change Event "Earth Hour", March 29, 2008**

Regional Councillor Taylor received the approval of Council to introduce the following motion.

It was moved by Regional Councillor Taylor, seconded by Mayor Scarpitti, that:

WHEREAS climate change is the biggest environmental threat to our planet and the number one concern for Canadians;

WHEREAS at exactly 8:00 p.m. on March 29, 2008, major cities around the world will turn off their lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and to symbolize that, working together, the people of the world can make a difference in the fight against global warming;

WHEREAS the event, called "Earth Hour", a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) initiative that was officially announced in December 2007 at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, has grown from a single event in Sydney, Australia to a global phenomenon that will occur across six continents and in as many as 20 cities in 2008;

WHEREAS last year, almost 2.3 million Sydney residents participated in Earth Hour – including more than 2,100 businesses – resulting in a 10 per cent reduction on the electrical grid, saving 25,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide – the equivalent of taking about 50,000 cars off the road for one hour;

WHEREAS some of the major cities around the world committed to joining Sydney in 2008 include Manila, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv, and Toronto;

WHEREAS Markham, Mississauga, Brampton and Newmarket may soon be joining the worldwide effort;

WHEREAS participating in this historic event sends a powerful message to every citizen and business around the world that it's possible to take action on climate change and that switching off our lights is just one simple action we can take to help make a difference;

WHEREAS the goal is to educate the community on the threat of climate change and what each individual and business can do to make a difference every day; and to get as many individuals, households, and businesses as possible to turn off their lights as a symbolic statement that now is the time to take action on climate change;

WHEREAS participating in this historic event sends a powerful message to every citizen and business that The Regional Municipality of York cares about our planet and is willing to take a leadership position against climate change and global warming;

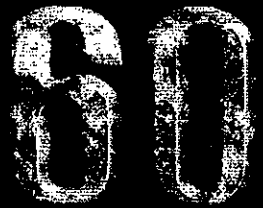
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Regional Municipality of York:

32.4

1. **THAT** at 8:00 p.m. on March 29, 2008, the Regional Municipality of York will join other cities around the world in literally "turning out the lights" by shutting off all non-essential lighting in all of its facilities, where feasible, and without jeopardizing safety, for one full hour;
2. **THAT**, to be formally recognized around the world as an Earth Hour participant, the appropriate staff register at [wwf.ca/Earth Hour](http://wwf.ca/EarthHour), the official website for this initiative;
3. **THAT** the Regional Municipality of York's participation in Earth Hour be widely promoted and publicized in order to raise awareness about this important issue and in order to encourage every individual, household and business in York Region, and beyond, to join in by turning off their lights for one hour at 8:00 p.m. on March 29, 2008;
4. **THAT** a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every municipality in the Regional Municipality of York, encouraging them to participate in Earth Hour; and,
5. **THAT** a copy of this Resolution also be forwarded to FCM (the Federation of Canadian Municipalities) with the request that a copy be made available to every municipality across Canada.

Carried

32.5



EARTH HOUR

Earth Hour
Level 13, 235 Jones St
Ultimo NSW 2007
PO Box 528 Sydney NSW 2001
Tel +61 2 9281 5515
Email earthhour@wwf.org.au

Make Earth Hour Happen In Your Town

On 31 March 2007, more than 2 million Sydney businesses and households turned off their lights for one hour - Earth Hour - sending a powerful national and global message that it's possible to take action on global warming.

At 8pm on 29 March 2008, Earth Hour goes global, with cities and towns around the world taking stand on the greatest threat our planet has ever faced, and millions of people uniting to turn the tide on global warming.

If you want to turn out the lights for Earth Hour in your town or city on 29 March 2008, this will help you get started!

Your Goal

Get the most people, businesses and government involved in Earth Hour and get them to turn off their lights for one hour at 8pm on March 29 2008.

Making Earth Hour happen

1) Building your Team

A good team is one of the biggest success factors for making Earth Hour happen around the world. Put together a small team of committed people and organisations to help plan how you can turn out the lights for one hour in your area.

Members of your Earth Hour Team could include your friends or schoolmates, members of your family or your neighbourhood, the local mayor or business leader, or your local school principal.

Pull together a team of people and organisations willing to put the time and effort into making Earth Hour happen and you'll be ready to get started.

2) Spread the Word about Earth Hour

To inspire yourself and those you speak to about Earth Hour, check out www.earthhour.org to watch the video of the first Earth Hour in Sydney in 2007. This video will go a long way to inspiring you and those you speak to, to get involved in Earth Hour and to help take a stand against global warming.



www.earthhour.org



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Think about how you could spread the word about Earth Hour in your area, how can you encourage the most people and businesses to turn their lights of for one hour at 8pm on Saturday 29 March 2008?

Thinking small can be big thinking

We've created a website to help you spread the word about Earth Hour. Register at www.earthhour.org and recruit your friends to the Earth Hour cause. Getting your friends and neighbourhood involved is the easiest way to be a part of Earth Hour and help make a difference to our planet.

Think big

Who in your town uses lots of power?

First stop, the city. The city is one of the largest users of power in your area. Write to your mayor or present the Earth Hour idea at your local council. If you can get the city involved in turning off their non-essential lighting for Earth Hour (in Sydney, we left our street lights on for safety), your town can make a huge difference.

Office buildings and big retail stores also use a lot of power. Write to the businesses and stores in your area and ask them to darken their buildings, neon signs, stores and restaurants for one hour for Earth Hour.

Ask your favourite restaurant to have a candle-lit dinner hour (using beeswax candles of course) and feature fresh "cold" dishes in the menu. Write to your local newspaper or television channel and tell them what you're doing - try and get some news coverage of what your town wants to do for Earth Hour and the planet...think big!

3) Be creative!

As well as asking as many people and businesses as possible to turn off their lights in your city or town at 8pm on 29 March 2008, think creatively about how to bring your friends and family together for the night.

Organise a "block party" in your neighbourhood with "in the dark" games and activities, organise a movie or music night at someone's house, look up at the stars, use the hour to talk about what you can do every day to save energy. Think about the different ways to have fun with Earth Hour.



www.earthhour.org



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4) What to do everyday

Turning off your lights for one hour at 8pm on 29 March 2008 is the first part of getting involved in Earth Hour. Making a difference to the future of our planet by making energy savings every day is the second part.

When spreading the Earth Hour message, don't forget to encourage your friends, family and workmates to turn off unused lights and appliances every day of the year.

5) Make It Happen

Every town and city is unique and can bring its own special touch, identity and passion of its communities to create its own Earth Hour on 29 March 2008. But making Earth Hour happen is up to you!

Whatever you can organise to help turn out the lights on 29 March - whether is a backyard barbeque or asking your local mayor to turn off the city's non-essential lighting - will be a success.

You can make Earth Hour happen if you work together.

6) Other questions you might have

If you're thinking about Earth Hour in your town or city at 8pm on 29 March, you'll probably have some other questions about how we did it in Sydney in 2007. Check out our website for some answers to Frequently Asked Questions.



www.earthhour.org