

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MARCH 25, 2008**

### **PROCLAMATION REQUEST - SEXUAL HARASSMENT AWARENESS WEEK**

#### **Recommendation**

The Deputy City Clerk in consultation with the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services/City Solicitor recommends:

- 1) That the first week of June 2008 be proclaimed as “***Sexual Harassment Awareness Week***”; and
- 2) That the proclamation be posted on the City’s website and published on the City Page, space permitting.

#### **Economic Impact**

N/A

#### **Communications Plan**

The Corporate Communications Department posts proclamations issued by the City on the City’s website under “Events – Proclamations”. Publishing proclamations on the City Page depends on the space availability.

#### **Purpose**

To respond to the request received February 5, 2008 from the Women’s Support Network of York Region. (Attachment 1)

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The Women’s Support Network of York Region (WSN) is the only sexual assault/rape crisis centre serving York Region. WSN provides support to individuals who have been affected by sexual assault, childhood abuse, sexual harassment and any form of violence. Their services include a 24 hour crisis line, individual counselling, public education, school based programs and outreach.

The proclamation request meets the City’s Proclamation Policy, as follows:

“That upon request, the City of Vaughan issue Proclamations for events, campaigns or other similar matters:

- (i) which are promoted by any organization that is a registered charity pursuant to Section 248 of the Income Tax Act”

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

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

**Regional Implications**

N/A

**Conclusion**

Staff is recommending that the first week of June 2008 be proclaimed as "***Sexual Harassment Awareness Week***" and that the proclamation be posted on the City's website and published on the City Page, space permitting.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1 - Correspondence received from the Women's Support Network of York Region

**Report prepared by:**

Sybil Fernandes, Deputy City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

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Sybil Fernandes  
Deputy City Clerk

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Janice Atwood-Petkovski  
Commissioner of Legal and Administrative  
Services/City Solicitor

## Attachment 1

www.womenssupportnetwork.ca

1110 Stellar Drive, Unit 109  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 7B7  
T: 905.895.3646  
F: 905.895.6542

Crisis Line: 905.895.7313  
1.800.263.6734

February 5, 2008

City of Vaughan



women's support network  
of york region

Re: Request for Proclamation

Dear members of Council for the City of Vaughan,

According to Statistics Canada: "1 in 2 Canadian women have experienced some form of sexual violence". However, sexual assault is one of the most under-reported of all crimes. The latest surveys show that less than 10 percent of sexual assaults were reported to the police. Of those that are acquaintance rapes, only 1 in 100 is reported to the police. Victims' decisions to report the violence depend on a variety of factors, some of which include fear of the offender, fear of re-victimization in the legal process, shame and embarrassment, and regional availability of services.

Located out of Newmarket, the Women's Support Network of York Region (WSN) is the only sexual assault/rape crisis center serving the entire York Region. We provide support to individuals who have been affected by sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, sexual harassment, date rape and any form of violence. Our services include a 24-hour crisis line, individual counselling, public education, school-based programs and outreach.

Beginning in 2007, the McGuinty government declared the first week of June to be "Sexual Harassment Awareness Week". Studies show that a majority of women will experience sexual harassment at some point in their lives. Sexual harassment can also happen to men. The first week of June, marks the anniversary of Theresa Vince's death. Theresa was murdered by her boss at her workplace in Chatham, Ontario after years of unrelenting sexual harassment.

The Women's Support Network of York Region is requesting for all the municipalities in York Region to show their support by partnering with WSN in some capacity, during 2008's upcoming "Sexual Harassment Awareness Week". This support could come in the form of having WSN provide an educational presentation to staff, by attending a community, awareness-raising event or perhaps by releasing an awareness-raising statement in your local media.

We seek to work in partnership and solidarity with all communities, including support from York Region municipalities, to increase accessibility to essential services for all survivors of sexual violence throughout York Region, and to encourage educational and preventative action, with the ultimate goal of eliminating *all* forms of sexual violence and abuse.

Sincerely,

Susan Dobson  
Public Education Outreach Worker and Counsellor  
Women's Support Network of York Region  
Registered Charity number: 13556 2262 RR 0001