

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 16, 2008**

### **GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE USE OF CITY-OWNED HERITAGE BUILDINGS ONE YEAR STATUS REPORT**

#### **Recommendation**

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

1. That the status report with regard to the *Guidelines Governing the Use of City-owned Heritage Buildings* be received and that the program, be continued.

#### **Economic Impact**

There are no costs relating to this status report to Council.

#### **Communications Plan**

Staff will continue to advertise the program to the public through the Recreation Guide, brochures and the City's website.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's request in June 2007 to provide a report back to Council one year after the implementation of the *Guidelines Governing the Use of City-owned Heritage Buildings*.

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

At the June 25, 2007 Council meeting, the *Guidelines Governing the Use of City-Owned Heritage Buildings* were approved with a further direction to staff to report back within a year's time on the implementation of these Guidelines. The Guidelines reflect the overall service philosophy and procedures related to the public use of City-owned heritage structures.

The City of Vaughan has ownership of fourteen (14) heritage buildings that have been restored and are managed and maintained by the City as part of its inventory of City-owned public facilities. The preservation of these buildings and the protection of their heritage character is the primary objective of the City in its stewardship of these properties. These heritage buildings are significant to the history of the community and are themselves considered important cultural landmarks. The usage of these buildings by the community is integral in creating vibrant and purposeful focal points within Vaughan.

The approved Guidelines identified a number of key goals related to the implementation of the Guidelines as follows:

1. To establish guidelines and procedures for the community-use of City-owned heritage buildings for their short-term and long-term utilization.
2. To increase the use of City-owned heritage buildings by establishing programs, services and fees that provide affordable access to heritage buildings.
3. To ensure equitable practices in the overall use of City-owned heritage buildings by providing standard procedures relating to the permit or lease of the buildings.

4. To ensure City By-laws and health and safety requirements are followed in the public use of City-owned heritage buildings.

With the approval of the *Guidelines*, the following requirements/changes were implemented:

1. Required that standard guidelines and procedures for the community-use of City-owned heritage buildings for their short-term and long-term utilization are adhered by all users;
2. Established a 50% reduced rental rates for the use of heritage buildings to encourage an increase in use of these buildings and provide affordable access to these buildings;
3. Required that the heritage character of these buildings is maintained and that changes or additions to these buildings to accommodate users are sympathetic or appropriate for the building;
4. Required that equitable practices in the overall use of City-owned heritage buildings are adhered to by providing standard procedures relating to the permit or lease of the buildings;
5. Established programs at a number of heritage buildings to increase their public utilization.
6. Ensured that City By-laws and health and safety requirements are followed in the public use of City-owned heritage buildings.

#### Utilization of City-Owned Heritage Buildings

The *Guidelines* require all users to obtain a permit for their use whether for one evening per week or for permanent office space within these buildings. For extended uses such as the long-term use of an entire building or part of a building, the City may enter into a formal rental agreement for the use of a heritage building. Lease arrangements must be reviewed and approved by Council. Again, this requirement will ensure equitable practices are enforced in the overall use of heritage buildings.

Since June 2007, a number of new permits, lease arrangements and uses have been established in heritage buildings that have incorporated the goals and requirements of the *Guidelines*. These new permits/leases and programs have resulted in an overall 23% increase in utilization of these buildings in the last year. They are as follows:

##### *1. Arts in Heritage Buildings Program*

Council approved in June 2007 the Arts in Heritage Buildings program that facilitated the use of heritage buildings for a one or two week period for arts and cultural uses at a cost of \$150 per week. After some work (lighting and hanging rail system) to the MacDonald House, 121 Centre Street, the program was launched in January 2008. To date, (since launching the program) approximately 13 permits have been issued to arts and cultural related groups, businesses and individuals for their use under this program and a revenue increase of \$2000. The MacDonald House and Vellore Hall have been the most popular sites by users. A report with regard to the program will be brought to Council in September 2008 as per Council's direction.

##### *2. Wallace House, 137 Woodbridge Avenue*

In November 2007, Council approved the governing guidelines for the Wallace House Committee and its use (through a yearly permit) of the Wallace House, Woodbridge. The Wallace House program is a volunteer-based initiative that provides historical, cultural and community programs within this City-owned heritage building.

##### *3. Kline House, 8 Nashville Road*

In November 2007, Council approved the use of the Kline House by the Kleinburg Old Boys (through a yearly permit) and the facility permit management arrangement at the building.

*4. Armstrong House, 42 Old Yonge Street*

In November 2007, a 3-year lease for the use of the top floor of the Armstrong House was executed with the Society for the Preservation of Old Thornhill (SPOHT) to house and use as their archives (approved by Council in June 2007). The Society moved their archives in November 2007.

*5. Charlton House, 220 Charlton Avenue*

In March 2008, a 3-year lease was approved by Council for the Charlton House and its use by Hospice Thornhill.

*6. Recreation Programs at Heritage Buildings*

In September 2008, a number of arts related workshops will be offered at the MacDonald House, the Armstrong House and Vellore Hall that will use the unique building setting of these sites to augment the instructional programming experience for participants.

*Affordable Access to Heritage Buildings*

As it relates to affordable access, in June 2007, Council approved a 50% reduction in fees for the use of heritage buildings for youth, Community Service Organizations (as defined by the Recreation and Culture CSO criteria) and schools (\$22 per hour use). In addition and as mentioned above, a new weekly rental rate category was introduced for these groups that charges \$150 for a one week use. The reduction of fees for these groups and the introduction of new fee categories were intended to increase the use of these buildings by the community and provide affordable access to these buildings.

*Health and Safety & Sympathetic Changes to Buildings*

City staff ensures that health and safety requirements, City policies and City by-laws are adhered to with all uses and users at the facilities. Additionally, staff ensures that any changes requested or required to buildings on the interior or exterior are sympathetic to the heritage character of the building. This is an on-going practice in the management of our facilities and programs and the necessary requirements are incorporated in the management of permits, leases and programs at these sites.

**Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:  
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report does not recommend a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

**Regional Implications**

There are no Regional implications associated with this report.

### **Conclusion**

Since June 2007, the use of City-owned heritage buildings has expanded and a number of existing uses have been formalized resulting in a 23% increase in utilization of these buildings. The Guidelines have been useful in identifying procedures and requirements when dealing with the utilization of these buildings. On a go-forward basis, staff will continue to identify programs and services that will increase the utilization of City-owned heritage buildings and ensure the guidelines and procedures are implemented in the management of these facilities.

### **Attachments**

None.

### **Report Prepared By**

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Respectfully submitted,

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