

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – NOVEMBER 10, 2009

MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL EVENTS

Recommendation

The Chair of the Communities in Bloom (CIB) Beautification Committee, in consultation with the Chairs of the Vaughan Tourism Advisory Committee and Peace Tree Day Committee recommend:

1. That this report be received;
2. That City Staff be directed to submit an application to Celebrate Ontario requesting a grant for a Multicultural Festival to take place during the month of June 2010; and
3. That City Staff provide a workplan and budget, should the City's application to Celebrate Ontario be successful.

Contribution to Sustainability

Not applicable

Economic Impact

If the Celebrate Ontario grant application is successful, a detailed workplan and budget will be brought back to the Budget Committee for consideration.

Communications Plan

Not applicable at this time.

Purpose

To report on the first Multicultural Festival and to seek approval to proceed with a multicultural event in 2010 as a legacy program of the Communities in Bloom Beautification. This Multicultural Festival would celebrate Vaughan's multiculturalism and diversity, recognizing that such events build awareness that the City of Vaughan has a rich social-cultural heritage.

Background – Analysis & Options

During the period of September 29 to October 4, 2009, the City of Vaughan hosted the Communities in Bloom National Conference and Awards Ceremonies. In support of the Conference, the City of Vaughan successfully obtained funding from the provincial Ministry of Tourism, on the basis that such events could become multi-year initiatives.

As part of the National Conference, Vaughan held its first-ever Multicultural Festival evening, celebrating Vaughan's diverse cultures in the form of food, art, music and dance. Performers and food suppliers were drawn from the local community. The evening was attended by over 700 people, including CIB registrants, sponsors and local residents.

While the CIB events may have concluded, it was recognized that the Multicultural Festival evening was a great success and could continue as a legacy event of CIB, building on the community's pride; promoting mutual respect and understanding; and generating economic activity for Vaughan. During discussions with the Chairs of the Tourism Advisory and the Peace Tree Day Committees on the potential to develop a legacy event, it was discovered that a number of similar and complementary events were being contemplated for 2010.

Working together with these groups, the City of Vaughan could develop a host of multicultural events that could include Peace Tree Day, sports activities, a multicultural film/comedy event, cultural shows, etc. These events could be branded together as part of Vaughan Peace Tree Month taking place in June 2010.

June also coincides with York Region's Tourism Week, and the Province's Tourism Week. Annually in June, the Ministry of Tourism declares one week national awareness week to highlight the economic and social value of tourism and encourage "staycations" in the Province. Leveraging the public awareness generated by the Region and the Province, may further enhance the City's program.

Staff will prepare and submit an application for the Celebrate Ontario Grant. If successful, City Staff will develop a workplan and budget.

The deadline for applications is November 27, 2009.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and specifically goal: *Preserve Our Heritage & Support Diversity, Arts & Culture*

The necessary resources have not been allocated.

Regional Implications

Should Council approve this initiative, the Region of York's Economic Strategy & Tourism Department will be notified and asked to support the City of Vaughan in the development and promotion of these events.

Conclusion

Festivals and events contribute to the character of communities. The Multicultural Festival, if supported by community groups, local businesses and tourism operators, can generate economic activity and spending, as well as enrich and preserve our heritage, arts and culture.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Tony Carella, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Committee
Sandra Yeung Racco, Chair of the Peace Tree Day Committee

Respectfully submitted,

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