

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE FEBRUARY 2, 2010

CITY OF VAUGHAN HOSTING CCMARD WORKSHOP – MARCH 2010

Recommendation

Councillor Alan Shefman recommends that Council approve the request by Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) to host a workshop meeting of Ontario municipal members of the organization in March 2010 (final date to be determined.) Approximately 50 participants are expected to attend.

Contribution to Sustainability

Sharing of information and resources by Ontario municipalities may result in greater efficiencies of the participants.

Economic Impact

Most costs associated with this event will be borne by the sponsoring agencies, including the Ontario Human Rights Commission, acting on behalf of CCMARD. Costs incurred by the City may include the venue for the event (if not held in a City owned location), hosting a pre-meeting reception the evening before the meeting, refreshments for coffee breaks and some limited staff time. Funds for lunch will be provided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Communications Plan

In cooperation with CCMARD, a media release would be prepared and distributed.

Purpose

In 2007 an organization called Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination was established. The City of Vaughan was one of the first municipalities in Canada – the 14th -- to join the Coalition when it was approved by Council in May of 2007.

This UNESCO-supported initiative in Canada is part of a global movement that recognizes local communities as ideal places to develop strategies and take meaningful action towards eliminating racism and discrimination. It envisages establishing a network of cities interested in exchanging experiences and expertise and committed to adopting a Plan of Action to address racism.

On March 29, 2007, Ontario municipalities participated in a provincial forum of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination, held in Windsor, Ontario. The Chair of the Community Equity and Diversity Committee, Councillor Alan Shefman, attended the forum in order to gain a better understanding of the Coalition and determine how it would benefit the City.

One of the aspects of the purpose of the Coalition that was considered at that meeting was to recognize that; "municipalities in Canada must look for new ways to renew their pledge to address racism and discrimination". A key aspect of the Coalition framework is cooperation among municipalities, other levels of government, Aboriginal peoples, the private sector and civil society organizations, all of whom have responsibilities in the area of human rights.

Furthermore, it is held by the members of CCMARD that; "By taking action to combat racism and multiple forms of discrimination, municipalities will be better able to build respectful, inclusive and safe societies where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the economic, social, cultural, recreational and political life of the community."

The specific purpose of the Vaughan meeting will be to move the Coalition forward with tools that will enable members, especially in Ontario, to engage and learn from each other. With good planning and promotion, the event should highlight the importance of building a strong Ontario network that will focus on anti-racism initiatives to promote more inclusive communities across the Province.

Background - Analysis and Options

1. The City of Vaughan approved membership in CCMARD – Item 24, Report No. 22, of the Committee of the Whole, adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 7, 2007.

2. As stated by the Ontario Human Rights Commission when they first broached the subject of hosting the meeting:

The City of Vaughan's commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community and its four strategic initiatives which focuses on excellence in service delivery, ensuring community safety and wellness, environmental sustainability, preserving heritage and supporting diversity makes it an ideal municipality to be a partner and a host the event in March. Further, the manual developed from the preceding Round Table Discussion and the tools will be very useful in helping the city develop initiatives from an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory perspective.

3. The CCMARD meeting comes at an ideal time for the City as it is currently embarking on the development of a Diversity Policy. Staff who are assigned to that project will have the opportunity to participate in the CCMARD meeting.

4. Presently the OHRC has entered into a partnership with York University's School of Public Policy and Administration and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) to prepare for the event in March.

5. The CRRF agreed to form a partnership to co-sponsor the development and carrying out of a Round-Table Discussion (RTD) focused on dealing with racism and discrimination in municipalities. This RTD is scheduled for January 21, 2010 at York University. Councillor Shefman will be attending.

6. The CRRF will be providing support in the area of communications and coordination of both the January RTD and the March event such as:

- Sending out invitations and materials for both events
- Promoting the event to CCMARD members through the CRRF's CCMARD portal

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

- To preserve and protect Vaughan's Heritage, arts and culture and diversity.

Regional Implications

None

Conclusion

Hosting the CCMARD Regional event in March of 2010 is an opportunity for the City of Vaughan to continue to be recognized as a progressive municipality amongst its peers.

Attachments

none

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Respectfully submitted,

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