

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE FEBRUARY 2, 2010

CITY OF VAUGHAN MARATHON

Recommendation

Councillor Alan Shefman recommends that in light of the current debate taking place by Toronto City Council to restrict the number of Marathons to a single event in the future and that because this decision may result in one of the two marathons being without a location, that

1. Staff investigate the possibility of inviting the organizers of the Toronto events to consider holding one of these marathons in the City of Vaughan in the future, and
2. A report be prepared for Council's consideration on the feasibility of a marathon taking place in the City, and
3. Part of the consideration in the staff report include how the current organizers for the Run for Vaughan be involved in the planning and sponsorship for such an event, and
4. The fund raising focus for such an event be to support the development of a hospital in the City of Vaughan

Contribution to Sustainability

Every effort will be made to ensure that this event will be respectful of the environment – having 3 or 4 thousand people running through the streets of Vaughan is a great example for people to get out of their cars and using another means to get around.

Economic Impact

Holding a marathon will attract significant attention to the City that may result in a positive image for the City.

There may be some costs for the City – these issues will need to be explored in the report to Council.

Communications Plan

If the City is successful in attracting a marathon event to the City, a full blown communication plan will be required. In the interim, if this recommendation is approved, a media advisory should be issued as soon as possible to advise the public of our interest.

Purpose

This recommendation instructs staff to prepare a report to consider the possibility of initiating a marathon event for the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

Marathon events that take place in locations throughout the world have resulted in attracting enormous amounts of positive publicity for the municipalities in which they take place.

These events reflect a commitment to positive physical fitness. In Vaughan this would be supportive of our recently approved our Active Together Recreation Master Plan as well.

Over the years The Run for Vaughan has become increasingly popular and has resulted in funds being raised for the Vaughan Health Care Foundation. Holding a marathon race in cooperation with the Run for Vaughan in some form and directing the marathon event fund raising component to the Foundation would significantly increase the potential of increasing the amount of funds raised in support of a Vaughan hospital.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

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

To enhance and ensure community safety, health and wellness through education, design and enforcement.

Regional Implications

Dependent upon the route of the marathon, certain parts of the event may take place in contingent areas of York Region. Furthermore, Regional roads would be used. Finally, the York Regional Police would be required to assist in traffic control for the event.

Conclusion

Holding a marathon in the City of Vaughan has the potential for an exciting and positive event for the City in a variety of ways.

Attachments

1. Toronto Star Article – January 26, 2010

Report prepared by:

Debi Traub, Council Executive Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shefman
Councillor, Ward 5

ATTACHMENT 1:



Back to City should allow one marathon a year, staff say

City should allow one marathon a year, staff say

January 26, 2010

John Spears

Toronto should have only one marathon per year, according to a report by city bureaucrats, and starting in 2011 those who want to organize it should have to race for the right to do so.

The works committee will consider the report next week. (Tuesday Feb. 2) Toronto currently has two marathons, held only three weeks apart in fall. Officials have taken heat over closed roads, transit disruption and interference with business. But efforts to get the two existing race organizations to merge their efforts failed.

“One marathon for the City of Toronto can enhance a city’s athletic running profile on a local, national and in some cases international level,” says the report. “It can also increase tourism for the city.” But it suggests the right to hold it should be determined by a request-for-proposals process.

Jay Glassman, race director for the Goodlife Toronto Marathon, said he had warned city officials 10 years ago that two races in the fall was one too many. His race and its predecessors, starting in North York, has been run for 32 years; the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon started a decade ago.

He said he’ll be bidding for the race: “We will put together an excellent proposal.”

Glassman and Alan Brookes, race director for the waterfront marathon, said they couldn’t join forces in part because they have different ideas of what the race should be.

“We’re grassroots,” said Glassman, who doesn’t offer appearance money to elite runners from Ethiopia and Kenya.

His race, he said is geared toward those who run for fun: “People who are running it want to finish the same day — at the end you’re vertical, you’re smiling and you’re happy with yourself.”

Brookes, whose organization has hired lobbyists to put its case to councillors, said it makes sense to have a single marathon.

But he said Toronto should try to attract elite athletes, turning it into a major marathon like Chicago, New York or Berlin.

“I don’t know of a city marathon that doesn’t have an elite component, with the stars racing head to head to get national records, world records, fast times, live television — a real buzz and excitement. That’s what city marathons are about.”

Brookes said other bidders might crop up.

“I guess Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment could put in an RFP,” he said. “I hope not, or we’d end up with a marathon like the Maple Leafs.”

Glassman and Brookes agreed that the city should move swiftly in choosing a race, however since planning for the 2011 event has to start by this summer.

Councillor Karen Stintz (Ward 16, Eglinton-Lawrence), who ran the waterfront marathon last fall, agreed that one race should go.

“I think it was too much — the disruption, and you don’t get your critical mass of runners,” she said in an interview. “You don’t get the benefits in terms of sponsorships, enthusiasm, community support.”