

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JULY 6, 2010

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE: ASSIGNING A DISTINCT NAME TO ALL STORM WATER MANAGEMENT PONDS ON PUBLIC LANDS IN THE CITY OF VAUGHAN

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella and Councillor Alan Shefman jointly recommend:

- 1) that appropriate staff bring forward a policy for assigning place names to each of the 120 storm water management ponds that are on public land within the City of Vaughan and/or are managed by the City of Vaughan; and
- 2) that a simple, low-cost sign, similar to local street name signs, be posted at each pond, facing the most travelled roadway abutting each pond; and
- 3) that businesses that publish maps of the City of Vaughan that are offered for sale to the general public be supplied with both a list of the named ponds and a map of the City upon which the location and names of the ponds have been indicated, with the request that future editions of such maps as published by them indicate the location of each pond and incorporate their assigned names; and
- 4) that this policy be applied as additional storm water management ponds are built across the City

Contribution to Sustainability

Storm water management ponds are vital in mitigating the threat of flooding, by slowing the flow of water into local creeks and rivers. As such, they make our collective lives sustainable. But such ponds, as a feature of the local landscape, have another, as yet unacknowledge benefit: they introduce water and greenery into neighbourhoods, softening our environment, and increasing the pleasant feel of any area, especially as the trees and other greenery which ring each pond mature and add height and depth to the local landscape---all of which contributes to sustainable urban and suburban living.

Economic Impact

The cost of signage of approximately the same size as local street signs, along with poles.

Communication Plan

Corporate Communications will issue an announcement to the media once Council has adopted this recommendation

Purpose

To create a sense of place at every storm water management pond on public property in the City of Vaughan by giving each of them a distinct name, relating to one or other of the streets which abut them.

Background - Analysis and Options

Nameless ponds inspire little interest. Indeed, imagine how popular Henry David Thoreau's classic of American literature would have been if it were titled *SWMP #237* rather than *Walden Pond*?

To see each of these bodies of water as simply a storm water management pond is to miss a golden opportunity to turn each of them into a genuine place, with their own sense of "thereness"---thereby transforming them into a neighbourhood amenity rather than a functional feature, bonus streetscaping rather than an engineering necessity. This is most easily and quite simply achieved by given each of them a "real" name.

The easiest means of achieving this end is to lay down a simple procedure. For instance, along a regional road with several such ponds, the largest could take its name from the regional road, and all others from the next busiest of abutting streets. In this rather logical way, the name of each pond will be quickly established in the public's mind, and reinforced with simple but effective signage, something equivalent to the standard local street sign, posted between each pond and the street from which its name derives.

Regional Implications

None

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.

Conclusion

As creating a "sense of place" at a variety of sites across the City is identified as a goal in our new Official Plan, this goal can be achieved in well over 200 instances if we give each pond a distinctive name, rather than refer to them as "SWMP #1, #2, #3, etc."

Attachments

None

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Respectfully submitted,

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