

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – APRIL 12, 2010**

### **BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES VISIT AUGUST 28<sup>TH</sup> - SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2009**

#### **Recommendation**

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati recommends:

1. That this report be received;
2. That staff in the Economic Development Department be directed to bring to Council a proposed monument sign concept with associated costs for Vaughan's designated space in the Baguio City Centennial Park.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

N/A

#### **Economic Impact**

Baguio City covered all the costs for ground transportation and hotel rooms within Baguio. The FCAV covered all costs associated with their travel as well as accommodations and meals for Vaughan delegates outside Baguio.

#### **Communications Plan**

Council Public Agenda.

#### **Purpose**

To report on the visit to Baguio City, Philippines and recommend a City of Vaughan Garden in Baguio Centennial Park.

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

Baguio City, Philippines has been a friendship city with Vaughan since 1997. Since the signing of the friendship agreement, several delegations from Baguio City have visited Vaughan. With the assistance of the Filipino–Canadian Association of Vaughan (FCAV), Vaughan has maintained an active friendship relationship including: a student visit from Baguio, product displays in the Vaughan Civic Centre, and in 2007, an official delegation from Baguio City to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of our friendship.

A letter was received from Mayor Reinaldo Bautista, Jr. inviting the Mayor and Regional Councillor Gino Rosati to travel to Baguio City to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year as a Chartered City and to participate in the Sister Cities and Town Twinning Summit. September 1 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, however the travel dates were from August 28 to September 10, 2009.

The Summit, with the theme of "Fostering a Culture of Oneness" promoted friendship and goodwill through an understanding of the achievements and experiences of the international partnership program. The Summit's activities included an inauguration of the Global Garden, sister city exhibits and the signing of the Baguio Centennial Declaration. There was also a forum discussing issues such as environment, tourism and sustainable development. Councillor Rosati was afforded a podium opportunity to share with the attendees a brief overview of Vaughan.

In addition, as the FCAV is a member of the Canada-Philippine Business Council members were able to facilitate meetings with the Canadian Ambassador in Manila and other business representatives.

Following that request Council past the following recommendation from the Economic Development Committee:

1. **That given the current economic downturn, the Economic Development Committee does not approve travel to Baguio City, the Philippines, by any member of Council unless paid for out of the member's own pocket, rather than from the member's budget or the Corporate Council Budget;**
2. **That the City provide the materials requested and that members of the Filipino-Canadian Association of Vaughan (FCAV) be asked to assist in the distribution of materials; and**
3. **That the following report of Mayor Jackson; dated June 22, 2009 be received.**

Regional Council Rosati choose to attend based on the above terms. In addition 4 members of the Pilipino Canadian Association (Erlinda Insigne, Tony Insigne, Imre Kosanyi and Flor Kosanyi) also participated.

Erlinda Insigne has also provided her own report which is attached and outlines the details of the event. Pictures are also enclosed reflecting the same.

The visit was a memorable experience and our participation was welcomed and very appreciated. We were also able to mingle and share information with other participants from within and outside the Philippines. In visiting the new renamed Centennial Park we looked at the various gardens from other cities and identified a spot for the City of Vaughan monument sign. Staff should continue to communicate with Baguio City to establish parameters for the monument sign and bring forth recommendation in the foreseeable future. Discussion also took place with reference to future cultural, education and economic activities with further communication to take place after the Baguio Municipal Election taking place this spring.

On a personal note this trip was a magnificent experience and gave me greater insight and appreciation for the culture of the wonderful Filipino people. Indeed it gives me even a greater understanding and appreciation for the many cultures that form part of our city.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and any future resources will be part of future budgets.

#### **Regional Implications**

N/A

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing and our ongoing commitment for economic as well as cultural international activities, I recommend approval of this report and with the expectation that a City of Vaughan monument sign will be established in the Baguio City Centennial Park, as a permanent feature.

**Attachments**

Pictures and a report from Filipino-Canadian Association of Vaughan.

**Report prepared by:**

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati

Respectfully submitted,

Gino Rosati  
Regional Councillor

## Baguio City Visit – Aug. 30 – Sept. 2, 2009

Vaughan delegation headed by Regional Councillor Gino Rosati traveled to the Philippines on Aug 30 – Sept 2, 2009 to attend the Centennial celebration of Baguio City, a sister city of Vaughan.

The Centennial celebration displayed the best of Baguio City. The first day was the opening of the sister cities exhibits held at a mall situated on top of the mountain. Baguio

City has 18 national sister cities and 14 international sister cities including Hangzhou, China; Hanyu City, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; Shepparton, Australia; and Vallejo, California. The City of Vaughan exhibits included Wonderland and the Vaughan Mills.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day was Sister Cities summit with a theme “*Fostering a Culture of Oneness*”. A Sister City Declaration was issued to strengthen the Sister City Ties, promote tourism, encourage community partnership and increase government systems development. Each sister city, international or domestic, presented an overview of its own city. Regional Councillor Gino Rosati presented the overview of the City of Vaughan which included vision of the city, services, location, population and demographics. He stated the City of Vaughan is one of the fastest growing cities in North America and a great place to live, invest and visit.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day was a gigantic parade. Regional Councillor Rosati in his red and bright RCMP uniform was one of the main attractions. The parade showed the best of Baguio City. The participants included the various citizens that made up Baguio City including indigenous people in their colorful native costumes, Penabunga (flower festival) participants, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) considered to be the West Point in the Philippines, numerous professionals like doctors, nurses, educators, businessmen, “barangays” (lowest political unit) and the politicians themselves. As well, there were various floats made up of flowers.

The afternoon was a tour of the Botanical garden, a tourist attraction of Baguio City, where the sister cities gardens were situated. Each sister city was allocated a garden. The Japanese and the Korean gardens were completed; however, the City of Vaughan garden was not. The City of Baguio sister city committee asked when the Vaughan garden be completed.

A meeting with the Baguio Chamber of Commerce was held. Regional Councillor Gino Rosati presented the Dongara business – waste material converted into pellets. There were some Baguio City businessmen interested. As well, a meeting was held at the Baguio City Economic Development Authority where entrepreneurs go to establish

“one stop” business in Baguio City. There were Canadian companies in Baguio.

The delegation a chance to tour the City including a visit to the Baguio City Library where 11 door-to-door boxes of donated books from Vaughan Public Libraries were officially handed over to the head librarian by Regional Councillor Gino Rosati.

The group stayed at the Baguio Country Club and Camp John Hay considered to be the best hotels in Baguio.

In Manila, the delegation met with the representative of the Canadian Philippine Chamber of Commerce. The stay in Manila included a visit to Tagaytay, a city south of Manila and known for tourism, however, because of the heavy rain, there was not much to see.

The Baguio centennial visit was fruitful and memorable. Definitely, it further strengthens the friendship between Baguio and the City of Vaughan. It was a trip that will long be remembered and the delegation was grateful to be able to attend the once in a hundred years celebration of Baguio as a city.



