

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - APRIL 24, 2012

REQUEST FOR FREE USE OF COMMUNITY SPACE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends:

1. That this report on the Request for Free Use of Community Space be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 4, Objective 4.1:

- To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

Economic Impact

There is no direct impact as a result of this item.

Communications Plan

The deputant, Mr. Peter Pallotta, will be informed of Council's decision on his deputation.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the financial impact of the request for free use of community centre space to hold monthly meetings for a support group.

Background - Analysis and Options

At the Council meeting held on January 31, 2012, a Finance and Administration Committee recommendation was approved that directed staff to prepare a report on the financial impact of the request made by deputant Mr. Peter Pallotta on December 13, 2011. Mr. Pallotta requested the free use of community space to hold monthly meetings for a Parkinson's support group. Currently the group meets in Richmond Hill at York Region Police #2 District and are requesting space at no charge within the City of Vaughan.

The rental of meeting rooms is governed under the Recreation and Culture User Fee and Pricing Policy. The policy classifies the rental of meeting rooms by Community Service Organizations (CSO's) as a basic level of service. Basic programs and services benefit from the greatest level of subsidy permitted within the framework of the User Fee and Pricing Policy. Community Service Organizations (CSO's) are a City approved Vaughan based, not for profit community organization run by an elected and volunteer board of directors whose prime purpose is to provide recreation, community or leisure services to the residents of Vaughan and are governed under the CSO Policy. The CSO policy outlines terms for existing CSO's and new community groups wishing to apply for status. The Parkinson's support group would qualify as a CSO and therefore the lowest, tax subsidized rate would be charged.

The City's ten community centres each incorporate some degree of multi-purpose space through a combination of meeting areas, activity rooms, halls and age-specific program areas. Meeting room space is available for rent by Community Service Organizations at the current rate of

\$17.81 plus HST per hour during prime-time hours (after 4pm Monday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday) or \$11.58 plus HST per hour during non prime-time hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm). The \$11.58 rate applies to groups renting a minimum of 30 prime time hours per year.

As of January 1, 2012, the total number of CSO groups was 300. In 2011, the Recreation and Culture Department generated approximately \$85,000 from the rental of activity rooms to Community Service Organizations. When this figure is broken down to represent meetings only, the revenue generated was approximately \$37,000 for the year (excludes parties, events and activities); of which approximately \$15,000 was generated during prime-time hours (evenings and weekends) and approximately \$22,000 during non prime-time hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm). Therefore, if changes are made whereby CSO's are not charged for meeting space the financial impact could be approximately \$37,000 annually.

Note: The Ratepayer Policy managed by the City Clerks Department allows qualifying Ratepayer groups to receive one (1) free Annual General Meeting (AGM) per year at a City / Library facility. In 2011, the number of ratepayer groups that held AGM meetings in a community centre was nine for a value of approximately \$480 in potential rental revenue. The Vaughan Public Library applies the same rates and procedures as Recreation and Culture for the booking of library space.

Municipal Benchmarking:

A review of surrounding municipalities including Brampton, Markham, Mississauga and Richmond Hill was undertaken to determine general principles with regard to free space for community groups. Booking policies at each of the benchmarked municipalities do not permit the use of free space for meeting purposes. Special requests, typically for events such as fundraisers, can be made to Council for consideration.

Generally speaking, and consistent with Vaughan, the municipalities surveyed base their CSO principles on not for profit organizations, who are open to all residents, and have at least 75% or greater residency in their groups. Noted below is information of how different municipalities deal with fees for meeting space:

| Benchmarking | Vaughan | Brampton | Markham | Mississauga | Richmond Hill |
|---|--|----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| CSO Policy in place | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Subsidized Rental Rates included in CSO policy | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Free Meeting Space for CSO groups | Ratepayer Annual General Meeting (AGM) | AGM | Registration only (sports groups) | AGM | AGM |

*Special requests can be made to Council for consideration.

2700 Rutherford Rd York Region Police #4 District:

Regarding Mr. Pallotta and the Parkinson's support group, staff has confirmed that space is available at no charge at York Region Police #4 District. Centrally located in Vaughan at 2700 Rutherford Rd (at the intersection of Melville Ave) and with accessible parking, the York Region Police #4 District community room holds a capacity of 60 people and includes use of the

kitchenette and fridge. A screen is also available if users bring in their own laptop computer. The booking process is easy and convenient for this space in that to book the room, a phone call to the booking coordinator at #4 District is all that is required.

Similar to how staff deals with any other Community Service and Social Service Organizations, staff will work with Mr. Pallotta and his Parkinson's support group to facilitate free use of space at this location for his group. *Note: If a change is approved for reducing fees for meeting space for Mr. Pallotta's group a precedent will be set that may result in other CSO's requesting a similar benefit which will have an economic impact.*

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to Citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health & Wellness.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

None

Conclusion

Applying the current policy noted in this report to Mr. Pallotta and the Parkinson's support group is consistent with the method of booking rental space for all other Community Service Organizations. Staff will work with Mr. Pallotta to assist the group with obtaining a room for their meetings at no cost at the York Region Police #4 District in Maple or at the lowest possible cost in community centres.

Attachments

None

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Respectfully submitted,

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