

## **COUNCIL – NOVEMBER 12, 2007**

### **NOMINATION OF OPERA YORK FOR PREMIER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS**

#### **Recommendation**

Councillor Tony Carella recommends:

(1) that the City of Vaughan nominate Opera York for receipt of the 2008 Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts, in the category of arts organization;

(2) that the nomination form be completed and submitted by appropriate staff in advance of the December 3, 2007 deadline;

(3) that the nomination be communicated immediately by the Clerk's Office to the Regional Municipality of York and all other municipalities in the Region of York, and that said communication include the request that the Chair of the Region of York and the mayors of all other municipalities in the Region of York be requested to submit letters of support to the City of Vaughan Clerk's Department no later than November 30, 2007, for attachment to the nomination form.

#### **Economic Impact**

Nil

#### **Purpose**

To promote the recognition of a vital Region-wide cultural resource.

#### **Communication Plan**

Corporate Communications will issue a press release immediately the nomination is approved by Council.

#### **Background – Analysis and Options**

Opera York's mission is to offer professional opera that is accessible financially, geographically and comprehensibly to the communities of York Region, while encouraging the development of the art form through educational and outreach activities. As a regional opera company it offers opportunities to both established and emerging Canadian artists.

A brief review of the history of Opera York reveals an arts organization which has had an enormous impact on the cultural life of Vaughan, the Region of York, and beyond in just ten short years. In that time it has:

1. developed from a Vaughan *Concert in the Park*
2. supported the York Catholic District School Board with advise and funding to purchase the technical equipment for the YCDSB's Performing Arts Centre from a federal Cultural Spaces Canada Grant in Vaughan
3. developed a new chorus of twenty members, a professional orchestra of twenty-two members, and an artistic staff with full-production capability

4. developed a traveling education program to introduce students to opera and to support the music curriculum and French Immersion programming; this program was recently presented in London, Owen Sound, Peterborough and St. Catharines

5. developed a seniors program which serves, Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Aurora

6. serves and supports the Vaughan Arts Advisory Committee, the Markham Arts Council and the York Region Municipal Cultural Forum Steering Committee

In 2006, the Government of Ontario created the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in the professional arts by an individual or a group. This year, the Government of Ontario separated the award into two distinct categories: one for an individual artist and one for an arts organization. One artist will receive a prize of \$35,000. The recipient will nominate a promising new or emerging talent in the same field who will receive a prize of \$15,000. One arts organization will receive a prize of \$50,000. All five short-listed finalists---in both categories---will receive \$2,000 each.

Artists and arts organizations engaged in any professional arts practice are eligible for the award. These include, but are not limited to: community arts, crafts, dance, music, opera, theatre, visual and media arts, writing or cultural industries such as book and magazine publishing, digital media, film, television and sound recording.

The Premier's Award is open to nominations from all Ontarians. The deadline is December 3, 2007. Nomination guidelines and nomination form are available only at the Ontario Arts Council

### **Regional Implications**

The Region of York and all municipalities in York Region will be invited to support this nomination.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

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

### **Conclusion**

Opera York merits the recognition the Premier's Award will confer on it, so it is appropriate that it be nominated by a municipality in York Region, with the support of the Region and the balance of municipalities in York Region.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Report prepared by:**

Councillor Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Carella, Councillor, Ward 2