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COMMUNICATION
FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND
AUDIT COMMITTEE
JANUARY 15, 2014
ITEM 1

DATE: January 14, 2014

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Marlon Kallideen, Commissioner of Community Services

COPY: Barbara Cribbett, Interim City Manager
Jeffrey Abrams, City Clerk

RE: Communication – Finance and Administration Committee Mtg, January 15, 2014

Item #2 – Finance and Administration Committee Meeting, December 2, 2013
“Ending September 30, 2013 – Consolidated Quarterly Report”

At the December 2, 2013 Finance and Administration Committee Meeting, Council requested staff to provide a report on the Dazzle Me! program and the Communities in Bloom program, comprised of Curb Appeal, Winterlights and Vaughan Alive!, including the costs and the possibility of securing sponsorships to run these programs.

Vaughan competed in the National Communities in Bloom program, and had won all eligible awards by 2009, along with being host to the National Conference that same year. In 2010, the Communities in Bloom Committee recommended that the City withdraw its participation in the Communities in Bloom (CIB) program. In accordance with the decision, the CIB operating expense budget was reduced from \$115,070 in 2010 to the current approved operating budget of \$80,140 (net \$70,140 as PowerStream previously contributed \$10,000) to maintain three of the community programs that were developed in consultation with the community. The three programs are: Curb Appeal, Winterlights and Vaughan Alive! (formerly known as Schools in Bloom).

The new Dazzle Me! program, although not part of the original CIB program, was formally launched in 2012 with an allotted budget of \$17,000 from the Beautify your Neighborhood program. The program descriptions including the budget allocation and community impact are provided below:

Dazzle Me!

Budget Allocation: approximately \$17,000

Community Engagement: 7 partnerships with community groups city-wide, and an additional 5 applications in queue for 2014

As per Council's direction, \$17,000 was allotted to the Parks and Forestry operating budget in 2011 to support the Beautify Your Neighborhood program (a community initiative). This program was rebranded to be called the Dazzle Me! program and was launched in 2012. The program invites community groups to bring forward ideas and initiatives that will improve the visual landscape of public spaces in Vaughan. Participants can secure donations and other in-kind services from private partners. To further assist community groups with landscaping and planting initiatives, the City annually supports up to \$3,000 via a combination of grants and/or in-kind services (staff time, planting materials, etc.) per ward as originally approved by council.

The remaining \$2,000 is utilized to print materials, advertising and associated communications. In 2012, the program received the E.A. Danby Award for Public Administration from AMCTO. Since rebranding the program, 7 partnerships have taken place with an additional 5 applications in queue for 2014.

Curb Appeal

Budget Allocation: approximately \$8,000

Community Engagement: volunteers assess all properties in Vaughan of which 650 properties are recognized (130 per ward) and 20 plaques are awarded annually at Council. It should also be noted that the city also receives approximately 200 nominations submitted by residents.

The Curb Appeal program recognizes homeowners and businesses who demonstrate exceptional pride and effort in the maintenance of their properties. Properties are judged using the following criteria: overall aesthetic appeal; use of variety, colour and textures in plantings and hardscape; use of shade trees; use of perennials and annuals; creativity in design and materials; use of mulch to retain moisture; use of drought resistant plantings and other environmental measures.

Since its inception, the program remains extremely popular and participation increases every year. Volunteers help assess all properties in Vaughan and 20 are chosen to receive a special recognition plaque from Council for their dedication and contribution to improving the visual landscape of Vaughan. The budgeted expenses are used to produce signs and cover the costs of advertising, plaques, training, and volunteer recognition.

Winterlights

Budget Allocation: approximately \$64,000

Community Engagement: lighting displays to various cores of the community city-wide with over 700 residents and visitors attending the Christmas Tree Lighting event at City Hall

The "My Vaughan Shines" program was discontinued, however staff were directed to continue to advance the core lighting program and operate the Winter Wonderland Park. The Winter Wonderland program at Vellore Hall includes the installation and removal/storage of lights. Other core lighting in various areas of the City includes Major Mackenzie Drive in Maple, Centre Street in Thornhill and Islington Avenue in Kleinburg. Please note that the Building and Facilities Department incurs costs to light the Beaverbrook House, the Kline House, and the Fred Armstrong Parkette in Woodbridge.

The program expanded in 2010 to include the Annual Tree Lighting at City Hall. The Christmas tree lighting event held in December has become an annual tradition in our community and is attended by more than 700 residents and visitors to celebrate the festive season with friends and neighbours. The event features a lighting ceremony with the Mayor and Members of Council, entertainment, festive music, holiday refreshments and a visit from Santa Claus. Participants are also encouraged to donate new, unwrapped toys for newborns to children 18 years of age as part of the City's annual Toy Drive in support of the CP24 Chum Christmas Wish Program. This year's balsam fir, standing at 35 feet tall, was delivered by Drysdale's Tree Farms Ltd., a sustainable farm. The tree was decorated with more than 10,000 LED lights.

Vaughan Alive!

Budget Allocation: \$8,000

Community Engagement: 40 to 50 schools/3,000 students and 25 community organizations city-wide

Vaughan Alive! celebrates school spirit and community engagement throughout the year. Over 195 schools are asked to participate by encouraging initiatives in the following categories: Beautification, Environmental, Goodwill, Active Living, and Arts and Culture. The program runs from September to May with awards recognition annually at Council in October to winning schools from each ward. It is anticipated that over 40 schools will participate in the program this year.

In 2013, the Vaughan Alive! program was expanded to include community organizations, libraries and community centres city-wide. In addition to the categories used for schools, new categories include cultural celebrations, participation of annual community events and volunteerism. Currently, five community organizations are participating in the program. Expenses for the Vaughan Alive! program include printing, promotional materials and facilitated workshops. In 2011/2012, Staples contributed \$250

in gift certificates. Annually, the Recreation and Culture Department offers 30 free skate/swim passes to each participating school.

Sponsorships

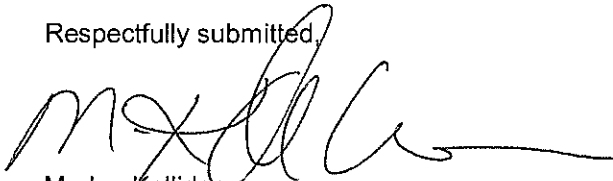
According to the draft Marketing Partnerships Strategy, companies are demonstrating increased interest in community partnerships as a core business model. Vaughan lends itself to a wide range of collaborative opportunities as companies establish their roots in the city and look for ways to build business and/or visibility demonstrate their commitment to the community. As part of the proposed implementation plan for the strategy, program staff will be trained in the skills required to identify, contact, present proposals and negotiate sponsorship agreements for community program-based opportunities.

Previously on an annual basis, the City applied for and in most cases successfully received sponsorship from Powerstream. However in 2013, the submission to Powerstream for \$10,000 was not successful.

It is therefore recommended:

- 1. That the program as outlined in this communication be maintained; and,**
- 2. That staff continue to explore any opportunities for partnerships and/or sponsorships in an effort to contain costs.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MK', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services