

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2017

Item 14, Report No. 13, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on April 19, 2017.

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NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager, Community Services and the Director of Recreation Services, dated April 4, 2017, be approved;**
- 2) That staff report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting with a draft statement of recognition and thanks to the appropriate aboriginal groups to be read at the Council Meeting of June 27, 2017, as part of Council's recognition of National Aboriginal Day, and that the said report also address consideration for developing a statement of recognition that could be used on an ongoing basis at future Council meetings;**
- 3) That this statement be initiated at the Council Meeting following National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2017; and**
- 4) That Communication C12, memorandum from the Deputy City Manager, Community Services and the Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer, dated April 4, 2017, be received.**

Recommendation

The Deputy City Manager, Community Services and the Director of Recreation Services recommend:

- 1. That Council proclaim June 21, 2017 as National Aboriginal Day in the City of Vaughan; and,**
- 2. That this proclamation be in effect for successive years moving forward.**

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, and Objective 4.1:

- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.**
 - 4.1.1 Develop an implementation plan for the initiatives described in the City's Active Together Master Plan through a phased and budgeted program.**

Economic Impact

National Aboriginal Day activities and events identified in this report will be presented in partnership with Vaughan Public Libraries, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. The program expenses will be shared amongst partners with each group responsible for their element of the program. Recreation Services will be utilizing the approved 2017 operating budget to pay for its portion of the day's event and will contribute in-kind services as it relates to promotion and distribution of information throughout the community.

The City of Vaughan has submitted an application on behalf of the partners for a federal Celebrate Canada grant to cover, in part, costs related to the delivery of the proposed programming. The outcome of this grant will be announced in May 2017.

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Additional funding through the City's operating budget process would be required should Council desire expanded programming outside of what is being proposed.

Communications Plan

The schedule of events will be posted on all four partner's websites and social media accounts. Details of the event in print will also be made available at all community centres, Vaughan Public Libraries, as well as distributed by our partners through their distribution channels.

Purpose

The purpose is to report back to Council on their request at the June 28, 2016 meeting for staff to bring back a report on declaring June 21st as Aboriginal Day in the City of Vaughan. Such a report was to include appropriate recognition, programming and celebrations that could be organized annually on the designated June 21st National Aboriginal Day and ensure appropriate members of the indigenous community were consulted on the proposed programming.

Background - Analysis and Options

Officially declared by the Canadian government in 1996, June 21st has been celebrated as National Aboriginal Day by recognizing the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. The Canadian Constitution recognizes these three groups as Aboriginal peoples, also known as Indigenous Peoples.

In cooperation with Indigenous organizations, the Government of Canada chose June 21, the summer solstice, for National Aboriginal Day. For generations, many Indigenous Peoples and communities have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day due to the significance of the summer solstice as the longest day of the year.

The Canadian Government celebrates National Aboriginal Day as part of the *Celebrate Canada* program. The City of Vaughan in collaboration with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Vaughan Public Libraries has collaborated to apply to Canadian Heritage's Celebrate Canada grant program for its joint National Aboriginal Day celebration.

Proposed Programming to Celebrate Aboriginal History in Vaughan

The proposed City of Vaughan's National Aboriginal Day celebration will take place on June, 21, 2017. Located at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the surrounding William Grainger Trail, there are proposed activities throughout the day that will celebrate the unique heritage and diverse cultures of Indigenous people in Canada. The programming is in collaboration and with contributions from the City of Vaughan, McMichael, TRCA and Vaughan Public Library.

Although programming and grant funding has not been confirmed at the time of writing, proposed programming may include the following:

Sunrise Ceremony and Indigenous Garden - Beginning with a traditional blessing by an elder and opening ceremony, an Indigenous garden will be unveiled on Aboriginal Day and maintained on the McMichael gallery's property that explores and revives the local cultural histories of the many Indigenous groups that have shaped our Nation.

The garden will be used as a teaching tool: a place of inspiration and reflection, creating an inclusive environment where the sharing of knowledge, exploring traditional wisdom, and community are shared.

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Lunch Hour and School Visits – Students attending the McMichael school visits program can commemorate National Aboriginal Day by participating in an Aboriginal Story Walk; an innovative and delightful way for children (and adults) to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. Organized by the Vaughan Public Libraries, pages from an Aboriginal author's children's book will be installed along the outdoor path leading to the gallery. Along with exploring the strong tradition of storytelling through the Story Walk, the lunch hour may also consist of a small performance from Indigenous dancers, drummers and/or vocalists.

Evening Public Gathering - Beginning at 7:00pm, the public will be welcomed for a second unveiling of the garden, public Story Walk and heritage guided trails along the Williams Granger Trail and a performance commemorating the day by Indigenous artists and animators. Some possibilities include a drumming circle, aboriginal storytelling, children's art activities or dance performances and a closing ceremony and blessing. The rich aboriginal history of the William Granger Trail will be highlighted, including Vaughan's archaeological heritage along this trail.

All proposed programming will be reviewed and confirmed in consultation with First Nations elders.

Relationship to Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map (2014-2018)

This report is consistent with the Term of Council priority to support and promote arts, culture, heritage and sports in the community.

Regional Implications

There are no regional implications with respect to the proclamation of June 21 as National Aboriginal Day in the City of Vaughan.

Conclusion

Through the celebration and proclamation of National Aboriginal Day, the City of Vaughan is recognizing and celebrating, the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across the country and in their own community.

Attachments

None

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