

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2013

Item 29, Report No. 14, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on April 23, 2013.

29 WOODBIDGE VILLAGE FARMERS' MARKET: SEASON TWO UPDATE

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Economic Development, dated April 9, 2013:

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Director of Recreation of Culture, recommends:

1. THAT permission be granted to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society (WAS) to operate the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market on the City's property (Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena Parking Lot) at no cost for its THIRD and FOURTH seasons of operation, that is 2013 and 2014; on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and that a storage unit be supplied to the Market, on the site at no additional cost.
2. THAT staff continue to work with the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market and other associated stakeholders to promote, when feasible, the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market through the City's website, social media accounts and other relevant publications and mediums.
3. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market provide to the City on an as-requested basis, booth space at no cost; and
4. THAT the information on the outcomes of the Farmers' Market second year of operation at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena parking lot be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with *Green Directions Vaughan: Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan*;

- Goal 4: To create a vibrant community where citizens, businesses and visitors thrive.
- Objective 4.3: To encourage the establishment of green businesses and sustainable business Practices.
- Action 4.3.3. Investigate opportunities for farmers' markets at civic facilities to establish support for urban and near urban agriculture.
- Goal 5: To be leaders in advocacy and education on sustainability issues.
- Objective 5.1: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community.
- Action 5.1.7. Develop an environmental education strategy for business and citizens. This strategy will highlight the steps that citizens and businesses can take to create a more sustainable Vaughan.

Economic Impact

Staff reviewed the City's rates for public permits and special events. The City has a Parking Lot permit fee (3 to 5 hours) of \$101.73 (plus HST – 2013 rates) for locally based community activities. The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market Organization is proposing to use the parking lot at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a period of 18 weeks. If Council adopts recommendation (1) of this report, it would equate to unrealized revenue totaling approximately \$1,831 per year.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2013

Item 29, CW Report No. 14 – Page 2

Communications Plan

Staff will work, when feasible, to promote the Farmer's Market on the City's website and through its social media, relevant publications and other mediums that could have a positive impact on the long-term viability of the Farmers' Market. Staff will also continue to make introductions of local food-related business to the Farmers' Market, to explore opportunities for collaboration and cross-promotion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to grant the Woodbridge Agricultural Society permission to operate the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market on the City's property (Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena Parking Lot) at no cost for its THIRD and FOURTH seasons of operation, approximately June to early October 2013 and 2014, on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Background – Analysis and Options

Year Two Review

Council approved a staff recommendation (Committee of the Whole Report No. 21 Item No. 21, adopted by Council on May 29, 2012) to waive the parking lot rental fee at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena, for the 18 weeks (Saturdays only) during which the Market was operational in 2012.

On February 26, 2013, Economic Development Staff met with Mr. Jamie Maynard of the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market. The following update and outcomes were provided:

Location

The Market's location at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena was deemed to be a good 'site' for the market. It provided more visible exposure to traffic on Hwy. 7 and Islington, and accessible parking. Furthermore, the setting was more aligned to a 'Market' feel with the river, trees and open space immediately adjacent to the parking lot.

Vendors

The Farmers' Market had a part-time market manager for the 2012 season, however, the organizers have been trying to find a more permanent solution, including hiring a co-op student. The position is integral to the operation and can be a tipping point for success or failure as the market manager's responsibilities include sourcing new vendors.

The Market has grown from 12 vendors in 2011 to 20 vendors in 2012.

Clientele

Throughout the summer the average attendance was approximately 400 people. During weekends when there were special events or promotions, attendance increased 25%, averaging 500 people.

Day & Time

The Market changed its day of operation to Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in 2012. Market organizers were able to compete for vendors with other markets across the GTA. Furthermore, the Market was able to generate better attendance compared to 2011.

Marketing

Organizers have taken a multi-pronged approach to promoting the Market. Some of the tactics include web presence (woodbridgevillagefarmersmarket.com and greenbeltfresh.ca), social media channels (Facebook), signage, and cross-promotions at other special events.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2013

Item 29, CW Report No. 14 – Page 3

With the assistance of City Staff, the Market was promoted through the following City channels:

- e-Business Link electronic newsletter (three editions) with more than 9,600 subscribers.
- Business Link newsletter (three editions), which has a circulation of 6,000 per edition.
- Events Calendar on the City's website, which has more than 100,000 visits per month.
- City Update e-newsletter which has more than 8,000 residential subscribers.
- City Page Online, June to October issue, more than 100,000 visits.

The messaging ranged from call for vendors to advertising the Market's dates and time of operations. The Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre also promoted the Market to small business clients.

2013 & 2014 Market Operations

It is WAS' intention to once again, operate the Market at the parking lot of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena in 2013. In the past two years, WAS has requested that the City waive of the parking lot rental fees. This has necessitated a report to Committee of the Whole each year. WAS is now requesting the City provide the waiver on a multiple-year basis, thus not requiring a report each year.

Although the goal was to have the Market be self-sustaining by 2013, they still require support from the City. Some progress has been made by the Market in 2012, and it is hoped that supporting the third and fourth years of its operations will help the Market get on more solid footings. A written account of their outcomes will be requested of WAS at the conclusion of each year's operations.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020 Goal 1: Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Vitality.

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

In recent years, consumer consciousness and demand has risen for locally-grown food, and preferably organic products. Farmers markets form a vital part of local food systems, allowing producers to connect with consumers directly. In addition to providing economic and environmental benefits, farmers markets contribute towards building the social and cultural fabric of a community. They are gathering and sharing places, and a connection point between urban dwellers and their agricultural heritage.

From a City perspective, assisting the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market organizers during the third and fourth years of operation to establish a Farmers' Market in Woodbridge continues to have the potential to bring people together and can turn an under utilized space (parking lot) into a hive of activity, attracting extra business for stores and restaurants nearby. Allowing the market to operate on the City's property at no cost for its third and fourth years of operation will allow the organizers to repurpose those dollars to additional marketing, programming and the attraction of quality local vendors.

Attachments

2012 Marketing Materials: E-News, Business Link

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2013

Item 29, CW Report No. 14 – Page 4

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)