

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2015**

Item 14, Report No. 20, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 19, 2015.

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### **PROCLAMATION- NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK 2015**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Human Resources and Manager of Learning and Organizational Development, dated May 5, 2015:

#### **Recommendation**

The Director of Human Resources and Manager of Learning and Organizational Development in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture recommend:

1. That Council proclaim May 31, 2015 – June 6, 2015, National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) in Vaughan; and,
2. That the presentation to Council on May 5, 2015, by Mr. Warren Rupnarain, City of Vaughan Accessibility and Diversity Coordinator, 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, and 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 economic impact.

#### **Communications Plan**

In consultation with the Corporate Communications Department, NAAW will be communicated through the City's external website, social media, poster and e-newsletter.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to have May 31<sup>st</sup> – June 6<sup>th</sup> proclaimed NAAW by Council and present an outline of the initiatives.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

National Access Awareness Week was first established in 1988 to better promote community access for people with disabilities. This initiative happened in response to a request from Rick Hansen following his "Man in Motion World Tour".

In recognition of NAAW, Vaughan is holding the following activities/events over a two week period:

- From May 24<sup>th</sup> to May 30<sup>th</sup>, the Recreation and Culture department is offering free activities for people with disabilities.
- On June 3, 2015, there will be a launch event for the Innovative Path System (IPS). IPS is a technology that notifies people with visual challenges where they are in a building through a Bluetooth device, specialized flooring and an electronic cane.

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- This technology will be implemented as a pilot project at Vaughan City Hall. On the main floor, the technology will be installed starting at the east and west entrances and will guide users to the information desk and to the south elevator. On the second floor, the path will guide users to the accessible washrooms.
- On June 7, 2015, the DANI Centre will be performing an “Alice in Wonderland” play featuring adults with accessibility challenges. The play will be held at Vellore Community Centre.

The barriers people with disabilities face are more prevalent as a result of the environment in which they live in, rather than their impairment. Obstacles to participation stem more from the environment in which people live than from within the individual's perception of their abilities. These barriers can be prevented, reduced or eliminated.

The inclusivity of citizens with disabilities is a corporate-wide vision shared by Vaughan Council and staff as identified in Vaughan's corporate strategic plan. The City plays an important role in ensuring access for residents with disabilities and through the Vaughan Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC). The role of the VAAC is to advise Council to support the City's work in identifying and removing barriers to lay the foundation for a barrier-free, inclusive community.

The VAAC formed a NAAW subcommittee to assist in NAAW promotion. Their guidance was very helpful in planning the activities/events for NAAW.

The City of Vaughan provides a number of programs and services for people with disabilities and regularly identifies and creates new opportunities to reflect the diverse and growing program needs of the community. Opportunities for persons with disabilities are vast and include the creative arts, health and wellness, life and social skills, performing arts, sports and leadership programs. In addition, Vaughan's Accessibility Plan outlines corporate and departmental objectives related to addressing accessibility issues and services at a corporate level.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report supports the Vaughan Vision 2020 initiatives of Service Excellence, specifically to “Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness” and “Preserve our Heritage and Support Diversity, Accessibility, Arts and Culture.

#### **Regional Implications**

There are no regional implications.

#### **Conclusion**

NAAW is an opportunity to promote the importance of accessibility. The week reminds us of the many contributions people with disabilities have made to society. It also reminds us of the physical, social, economic and attitudinal barriers that may exclude them from participating fully and effectively as equal members of society.

NAAW reinforces the importance of being a City where people of all ages, backgrounds can thrive.

#### **Attachments**

N/A

#### **Report prepared by:**

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