

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2013

Item 18, Report No. 32, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 25, 2013.

18 TRAVEL TO FRIENDSHIP CITY BAGUIO, PHILIPPINES – POST VISIT UPDATE

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Economic Development, dated June 18, 2013:

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Deputy Mayor/Regional Councillor Gino Rosati and Councillor Marilyn Iafrate recommends:

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

Contribution to Sustainability

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a Sustainability First principle and states that sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. Under this definition, activities which promote cultural diversity and embraces newcomers also contributes to Vaughan's ability to attract talent and human capital critical to tomorrow's workforce.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts associated with receiving this report. Costs associated with travel have been covered by the individual Council Member. Promotional materials and small gifts were provided by the Economic Development Department, at a minimal cost of approximately \$200.

Communications Plan

Formal communications with Baguio City will continue to be facilitated with the assistance of the Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan (FCAV).

Purpose

To report back to Council on the activities and outcomes of the social and cultural trip to the City's friendship city, Baguio, Philippines.

Background – Analysis and Outcomes

Baguio City, Philippines has been a friendship city with Vaughan since 1997. Since the signing of the friendship agreement, four official delegations from Baguio City have visited Vaughan. With the assistance of FCAV, Vaughan has maintained friendly relations with Baguio, including most recently, hosting an official delegation led by Mayor Mauricio G. Domogan from October 24-28, 2012.

In November 2012, an invitation was received from Mayor Domogan inviting Vaughan's Mayor and Members of Council to travel to Baguio City to participate in the month-long flower festival known as the "Panagbenga" – *The Season of Blooming* or the Baguio City Flower Festival, and to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the twinning of Vaughan and Baguio City. At the January 15, 2013 meeting of Committee of the Whole, Council approved Deputy Mayor Rosati and Councillor Iafrate to participate in the Flower Festival events taking place February 23 and 24, 2013. In addition to the two members of Council, members of FCAV: Erlinda Insigne, Tony Insigne and Lurvie DeBlois, also made the trip.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 32 – Page 2

The City of Vaughan's Economic Development Strategy: *Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy* identifies international relationships that have various objectives, from social/cultural enrichment, learning and knowledge exchanges to economic and business development. The City's relationship with Baguio, which has a social/cultural basis, provides a platform for cultural exchanges, and the City's recent visit advanced these objectives as well as knowledge exchanges.

Cultural Initiatives

In addition to attending the Sister Cities Forum and Panagbenga events, Vaughan's delegation was able to visit Baguio City Centennial Park, a popular tourist destination which features markers and monuments from its sister cities. Since Deputy Mayor Rosati's last visit in 2009, the City has placed a Twin City Monument in Centennial Park. This visit was the City's first opportunity to view the Monument which includes elements symbolic of Vaughan and Canada, i.e. Canadian maple leaves and the stonework masonry inspired by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection sign in Kleinburg.

Learning and Knowledge Exchanges

Vaughan's delegation met with Mayor Domogan, Vice Mayor Farinas, and other municipal officials. In a Memorandum of Agreement that was presented to its sister and twin cities which include: Gongju, South Korea; Taebaek, South Korea; Vallejo, California; Hangzhou, China; Hanyu City, Japan and Vaughan, Baguio City has articulated a series of best practices exchanges and initiatives for 2013. Signed at the Sister Cities Forum by four municipal representatives (Baguio, Taebaek, Gongju and Vaughan), the Memorandum is quite broad, encompassing initiatives that strengthen sister cities ties; promote tourism development; community partnerships; and government systems development. Vaughan was a signatory to the Memorandum of Agreement, agreeing to share best practices in waste disposal strategies (see Attachment 1).

Baguio, known as the Summer Capital of the Philippines, is a vibrant city of 334,000 people, a tourism centre and an important institutional centre that includes seven colleges and universities. The challenges of operating a city of this scale, requires management of its infrastructure, as well as its environmental footprint. Solid waste management is an ongoing concern. Vaughan offers a wealth of experience having developed a successful waste diversion program (i.e. Greening Vaughan), as well as being home to Dongara a producer of fuel-from-waste, and can help to inform Baguio's waste management programs.

Economic Development Initiatives

In addition to being a centre of institutional and administrative services, such as education and health, Baguio City serves as a regional commercial centre, with a growing financial services sector. Agricultural products, as well as mineral products from the surrounding regions pass through Baguio for further processing, sale and distribution. Through the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, a special Baguio City Economic Zone was established, and houses international firms such as Texas Instruments, Moog and Sitel.

During this visit, Vaughan's delegation met with the Baguio Chamber of Commerce, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Baguio Economic Development Authority and Philippine Chamber of Commerce -Toronto. A presentation entitled *Baguio City: An Investment Place* was received, providing an overview on the City as well as business opportunities (Attachment 2).

In addition to rehabilitating its sewage treatment plant, and privatizing its hydroelectric infrastructure, Baguio is seeking investments for its Asin Hot Springs Resort, Irisan Eco-Techno Park, a public market and green multi-level parking structure (Attachment 3 – Priorities of Investment).

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2013

Item 18, CW Report No. 32 – Page 3

During the Business Forum held on February 22, Baguio City Councillor Tabanda, Chair of the Sisterhood and Twinning Committee, proposed advancing its sister city programs to business exchanges focused on information technology, sustainable technologies and the arts.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set out by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved. Specifically, this report supports Vaughan Vision 20|20 Goal: Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Well-Being.

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan has been a friendship city with Baguio, Philippines since 1997. Baguio shares a common experience with Vaughan, as a vibrant regional centre. During the 15-year period of the friendship, Baguio has experienced in excess of 82 per cent growth in population (334,000 people), and similarly, Vaughan has also grown by 117 per cent in its overall growth rate. The Filipino community now ranks as one of the top ten ethnic groups in Vaughan according to the 2011 Census release by Statistics Canada's National Household Survey.

As Vaughan becomes a more diverse and multicultural city, there is a greater opportunity to establish relationships with its ethnic populations, for developing cultural ties, as well as expanding business opportunities. Attendance at the Flower Festival commemorating the 15th anniversary of the relationship is a positive relationship-building exercise and furthers our commitment to a friendship agreement, which is centred around opportunities for social and cultural exchanges. Friendship cities promote the City's cultural diversity and enhance its image as a welcoming community for residents from around the globe.

As previously mentioned Baguio City would like to advance the notion of revising Vaughan's current friendship agreement to include a focus on economic activities and outcomes. Baguio is a very entrepreneurial city and there may be opportunities for Vaughan businesses to partner, particularly in sectors such as building and sustainable technologies. Contacts from the Business Forum exchanges have been shared with the Economic Development Department to enable City staff to engage local businesses.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Memorandum of Agreement
Attachment 2 - Baguio City: An Investment Place
Attachment 3 - Priorities of Investment
Attachment 4 - Photo Gallery

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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.)