

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2012**

Item 36, Report No. 39, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 30, 2012.

**36**

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE VAUGHAN'S ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HISTORY: WORKING GROUP FINDINGS**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends:**

- 1) That recommendations 1, 3, and 4, contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Community Services, dated October 16, 2012, be approved;**
- 2) That Council supports the opportunity to celebrate Vaughan's Aboriginal cultural history, by approving in principle the following two proposed initiatives:**
  - i. The Vaughan Heritage Tourism Trail; and**
  - ii. Renaming of Aboriginal Archaeological Sites on TRCA lands in Vaughan; and**
- 3) That the establishment of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Vaughan be explored.**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommends that the following recommendations by the project working group, be approved:

1. That the presentation by Gary Wilkins of Watershed Planning at TRCA, be received; and,
2. That Council supports the opportunity to celebrate Vaughan's Aboriginal cultural history, by approving in principle the following three proposed initiatives:
  - i. The Vaughan Heritage Tourism Trail
  - ii. Renaming of Aboriginal Archaeological Sites on TRCA lands in Vaughan
  - iii. The establishment of a Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Vaughan; and,
3. That staff be directed to meet with Aboriginal groups for the purpose as identified in this report and,
4. That a joint City/TRCA grant application under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to provide financial support to conduct a feasibility study for the Vaughan Heritage Tourism Trail initiative, be approved.

#### **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, 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**

The cost of meeting with Aboriginal groups to discuss the proposed project is estimated at \$30,000 and the funds have been secured as follows: \$5,000 contribution from York Region; \$5,000 contribution from TRCA; \$20,000 allocated from Community Services Professional Fee approved in the 2012 Operating Budget.

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Any future funds that will be required for secondary phases of the projects identified in this report will be brought back to Council for consideration.

#### **Communications Plan**

Any outcome of this report will be communicated to the working group members.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the recommended options to celebrate the Aboriginal cultural history of the City of Vaughan.

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

At the November 8, 2011, meeting Council directed:

*That the City of Vaughan continue to work in conjunction with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and others to explore opportunities to celebrate the rich Aboriginal history of the City of Vaughan; and,*

*That the City and TRCA staff develops short, medium and long-term options for the consideration of Council.*

#### **Working Group Recommended Options**

As a result of the November 8, 2011 Council resolution, a working group was established with members of the TRCA and Vaughan City staff from the Economic Development and Recreation and Culture Departments. An invitation was extended to members of Council interested in being part of the working group; Regional Councillor Di Biase and Regional Councillor Schulte both agreed to be part of this working group. Over the course of seven months, the working group met several times and consulted various experts.

A York Region staff member was appointed by the Regional Chair to sit on the working group in the spring of 2012. York Region has recently undertaken an Aboriginal stakeholder process for the York Region Archaeological Master Plan and was invited to sit on the working group to provide best-practice experience.

As directed by Council, short to long-term options were developed by the working group and the recommendations are listed below.

1. *Participation in the Proposed Vaughan Heritage Tourism Trail Project to Develop, in Part, Interpretive Signage Commemorating First Nations History*

The working group recommends that the City of Vaughan participate in the development of a heritage tourism trail in Vaughan similar to the model of The Shared Path/Le Sentier Partagé Discovery Walk project launched in the Humber River Valley in Toronto in 2011. This project will be lead by TRCA and Vaughan would be its partner, recognizing that portions of the proposed heritage trail includes Vaughan lands and trail system

The Vaughan project would be an extension of its Toronto trail along the Humber River and would highlight the significant archaeological and Aboriginal history of this river system in Vaughan. The majority of the trail is already developed, or under review for future development.

The Shared Path/Le Sentier Partagé tells the early history of Toronto and Canada from the perspectives of its founding nations (Aboriginal nations, and early European settlers, the French

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and British) through a series of 13 story circles containing interpretative signage. These story circles are installed along existing pedestrian trails at contextually relevant locations that follow the banks of the Humber River, a designated Canadian Heritage River. The trail connects an ancient Aboriginal portage route (Carrying Place Trail) to modern roads and railways. The trail highlights how the Humber River is an ancient corridor for Aboriginal settlement and trade, a route for the fur trade with Europeans, and a reason for the founding of the modern City of Toronto. The Toronto trail project was developed in partnership with TRCA, the City of Toronto, Heritage Toronto, the Huron-Wendat Nation, Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and La Société d'histoire de Toronto. The award-winning project engaged First Nations and Métis groups, local historical societies and citizens. It was paid through grants, sponsorship dollars and municipal funding.

The Shared Path/Le Sentier Partagé: Discovery Walk model serves as a successful example for promoting the unique Aboriginal culture history, while enhancing existing municipal trails.

The proposed heritage tourism trail has a number of benefits to Vaughan that includes: the inter-regional trail in the Humber Valley from the top of Vaughan to the bottom; the connection of Vaughan to Toronto and Bolton along a continuous trail network; links Nashville Resource Management Tract, Kortright Centre and Boyd Conservation Area; links two designated Heritage Conservation Districts i.e. Kleinburg to Woodbridge; promotes the recently protected Skandatut First Nations and other archaeological sites in Vaughan; ties two major tourism anchors such as McMichael Art Gallery and Kortright; and importantly, provides opportunities to promote natural and cultural heritage as well as active living in the valleys.

Gary Wilkins in the Humber Watershed Planning section of TRCA will make a brief presentation at the meeting on The Shared Path/Le Sentier Partagé Discovery Walk project and the proposed Vaughan Heritage Tourism Trail project.

Should Council approve this project in principle, the next steps will be that the working group, with TRCA as the lead, and the City of Vaughan as a partner, along with local groups and organizations interested in participating in this project, will work towards the planning of the project. A grant under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport will be applied for, that if approved, will provide financial support for a tourism feasibility study grant related to the Heritage Tourism Trail project.

#### *2. Renaming of Aboriginal Archaeological Sites with Contemporary or European Names to the Aboriginal Cultural Context of the Site*

The working group recommends that the Aboriginal archaeological sites within the Humber Valley lands owned by TRCA and having contemporary or European names, be renamed to represent the Aboriginal cultural history of the site. This would be done through the re-registration of sites through the Ministry of Culture.

Archaeologist staff at the TRCA would lead in recommending and identifying appropriate names and sites on their lands and move towards renaming these sites as determined appropriate. City of Vaughan will collaborate with TRCA staff on this appropriate.

#### *3. The Establishment of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre*

The working group recommends that consideration be given, as a long-term initiative, to establish a cultural heritage centre in Vaughan that commemorates the history of Aboriginal people. The first steps in this initiative will be for the working group to determine an appropriate location for the centre on TRCA lands (as brought forward by TRCA), to determine project costs, identify other levels of government or other partners that will help fund and support the proposed centre and determine which level of government or organization will have the lead responsibility.

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The centre would be dedicated to the interpretation of Aboriginal cultural history that has history along the Humber River, including the Toronto Carrying Place Trail. This area within the Humber Watershed, is an early trade and transportation route for all Indigenous peoples throughout the ages, as well as the location of many archaeological sites dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The TRCA has policy to conduct archaeological assessments on TRCA lands and to curate the artifacts resulting from investigations of archaeological sites for educational programs related to Aboriginal history such as the Boyd Archaeological Field School (35 years running). This educational program could be easily aligned or expanded with a cultural centre for Aboriginal people.

One possible location for the centre is within the lands owned by the TRCA known as the Boyd Tract, which includes Kortright Centre for Conservation, Boyd North and Glassco Park.

#### *Meeting with Aboriginal Groups in Vaughan to Discuss Celebrating Aboriginal History*

The working group met with representatives and experts in Aboriginal affairs and as a result it was determined that it would be appropriate for the working group to meet with Aboriginal groups regarding this project since it involves the interpretation of Aboriginal history and heritage. With this in mind, it was determined that this meeting with Aboriginal groups is one of the first steps in moving forward with the initiatives. An expert facilitator is recommended to be hired to undertake this meeting.

The goal of the meeting would be to ensure that the three options recommended in this report to help celebrate Aboriginal history in Vaughan, be communicated effectively to Aboriginal stakeholders and that an open dialogue be created with these stakeholders. The ideal outcome of this process is to agree on a project plan or protocol that will ensure Aboriginal culture and history is represented accurately in the three initiatives identified above.

The overall cost of meeting with Aboriginal groups is estimated to total \$30,000. The cost of a facilitator is estimated at \$12,000 and the projected expenses cost is \$18,000 for two meetings – including the travel and accommodation costs of Aboriginal stakeholders.

The proposed meeting of Aboriginal groups in Vaughan will be fully developed and finalized with the assistance of the facilitator. Approximately 17 stakeholder groups will be invited to meet at Vaughan City Hall for two sessions to discuss the subject projects and develop a protocol for the future planning of these projects. The information obtained, protocols and work plan will remain the property of the City/Region and TRCA.

#### *Next Steps*

The proposed next step in realizing the three options/projects as summarized in this report is to initiate a meeting in Vaughan with Aboriginal groups to discuss the proposed projects.

All projects will require planning and a determination of costs and resources in each phase of their development. Any financial implications for the City will be brought back to Council for review.

To summarize, the proposed first phase in developing these projects include:

1. *Heritage Tourism Trail*: The working group, with TRCA as the lead, and the City of Vaughan as a partner, along with local groups and organizations interested in participating in this project, will work towards the planning of the project and seek a Provincial grant to fund a feasibility study for the project.

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2. *Renaming of Sites:* Through the working group, archaeologist staff at the TRCA would lead in recommending and identifying appropriate names and sites on their lands and take steps towards officially renaming these sites through the Ministry of Culture.
3. *First Nations/Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Vaughan:* Appropriate first steps include the working group identifying an appropriate location for the cultural centre on TRCA lands (as brought forward by TRCA), and determine project costs. They will also identify other levels of government or other partners that will help fund and support the proposed centre and determine which level of government or organization will have the lead responsibility. Once this is determined, this information will be brought back to Council for further consideration.

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

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**  
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated and approved.

#### **Regional Implications**

Regional staff has been recently appointed by the Regional Chair to the City/TRCA working group identified in this report. Although most initiatives identified in this report are on TRCA lands, the full impact, if any, to York Region is unknown at this time.

#### **Conclusion**

As requested by Council, options on how to celebrate Vaughan's rich Aboriginal history are outlined in this report as determined by a working group made up of TRCA, City staff and York Region staff. They include three recommendations: developing the Heritage Tourism Trail in Vaughan as proposed by TRCA; renaming Aboriginal archaeological sites to names associated with their Aboriginal cultural origin; and, establishing an Aboriginal cultural heritage centre within the Boyd Tract lands where, for example, the Kortright Centre for Conservation is located.

#### **Attachments**

1. Copy of Heritage Tourism Trail presentation
2. Copy of TRCA correspondence

#### **Report Prepared By**

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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.)