

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2012**

Item 37, Report No. 33, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 25, 2012.

#### **37                    INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXPLORATORY MISSION TO ISRAEL – POST MISSION UPDATE**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Director of Economic Development, dated September 4, 2012:

##### **Recommendation**

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with Ward 2 Councillor, Ward 5 Councillor and the City Manager, recommend that:

1.        This report be received;
2.        Staff in the Economic Development department develop and undertake a City led business mission with Vaughan businesses to Israel in 2013 that builds on the recently completed exploratory business mission.

##### **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 related to attracting and retaining business investments consistent with the Economic Development Strategy contribute to the economic vitality of the City.

##### **Economic Impact**

All costs associated with this report were budgeted in the Economic Development Department's 2012 operating budget. The cost per person was approximately \$5,200. If recommendation two of this report is approved, costs associated with the proposed business mission in 2013 will be budgeted in the 2013 Economic Development operating budget.

##### **Communications Plan**

Formal communications and one-on-one meetings will continue with the Government of Israel, Economic Mission to Canada, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce, local business leaders and other stakeholders. These communications will continue to emphasize Vaughan's international business development strategy and desire to open new markets for Vaughan companies. Also, the International Business Development Exploratory Mission will be highlighted in upcoming Economic Development communications such as the Business Link and the monthly Business E-Link.

##### **Purpose**

This report provides Council with an overview of the exploratory business mission to Israel led by Ward 2 Councillor Tony Carella and Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman with the Director of Economic Development, Tim Simmonds.

##### **Background – Analysis and Options**

As part of the City's International Business Development strategy for 2012, the City completed an exploratory business mission to Israel from July 2 – July 9.

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**Why An Exploratory Mission**

The goal of the exploratory business mission was to identify future business opportunities for the City with Israeli businesses and collaborate with key Israeli government agencies to better understand the current Israeli/Canada business relationship. In addition, if the outcome of the mission was deemed to be successful a longer-term international business development strategy for Israel would be created that aligns with the City's 10-year Economic Development Strategy.

**Israel A Country of Innovation**

Prior to the mission, research by the Economic Development department revealed that Israel boasts the highest density of start-up companies in the world, and some 63 Israeli companies were listed on the Nasdaq in 2009, more than any other foreign country, including Canada, Ireland, the U.K., Singapore, China, and India. In addition, Israel's broader economy has grown faster than the average of the world's developed economies. During this decade, Israel's share of the global venture capital market did not decline, it doubled, from 15 to 30 percent.

Though Israel is a small country with limited natural resources, it stands out as one of the most competitive economies. The country's market economy can be characterized as advanced technology based and global-oriented. Over the past two decades Israel has become famous for its high-tech capacity, particularly in telecommunications, information technology, electronics and life science. Recently Israel has been focusing on Clean Tech. There are 320 companies in Israel that can be defined as specializing in the Clean Tech field. In the last two years, more than 300 million dollars has been invested in the Clean Tech industry and more than 13 investment bodies were established in the Clean Tech industry. To put this in to perspective, the population of Israel is slightly larger than the Greater Toronto Area.

**Leveraging Local Stakeholders**

In creating the itinerary that would meet the goals of the exploratory business mission, the City worked closely with the Government of Israel, Economic Mission to Canada and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. Both the consulate and UJA were able to secure one-on-one business meetings and strategic meetings with key Israeli government officials and businesses.

Monday, July 2/Tuesday, July 3 were travel days – flying Air Canada, Economy Class, Toronto to Tel Aviv. Upon arrival and check-in at the hotel in Tel Aviv, the group reviewed the itinerary, meetings, and had a general review in preparation for the upcoming week. The mission would be centred on Tel Aviv, Eilat, and Jerusalem. In addition, the Cleantech Exhibition being hosted in Tel Aviv would serve as a logical anchor point for establishing a high-level understanding of the Cleantech industry in Israel.

**An Overview of Israel**

The first working day of the mission, the Vaughan team began the day with an early breakfast meeting with Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin who provided an update on the mood of the country. Ms. Eisin described the various political and social issues that were relevant to the City and International businesses who were conducting business in Israel. Ms. Eisen also highlighted the notion that Israel, unlike many other nations has a unique geographic presence, which lends itself to its need to be innovative and focused on solutions.

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#### **MATIMOP – Directing Innovation in Israel**

Following the breakfast meeting, the delegation traveled to the Office of the Chief Scientist – MATIMOP, in Tel Aviv, to meet with Mr. Yossi Smoler, Director of Technological Incubators Program, and Mr. Israel Shamay, Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Head of the Americas Operations. MATIMOP is the executive agency of the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS), of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor of Israel (MOITAL) and is the official National Agency for industrial R&D cooperation in Israel, charged with promoting highly supportive policies to build Israel's industrial infrastructure, and nurturing industrial innovation and entrepreneurship. MATIMOP is also the government agency that generates and implements international cooperative industrial R&D programs between Israeli and foreign enterprises.

As one of the goals of Vaughan's 10-year Economic Development Strategy is to promote innovation, the Director of Technological Incubators was able to provide a much better understanding of the role that incubators play in the Israeli economic development process and how they function; including the funding model for their long-term sustainability. The incubators described as a much needed component in Israel's innovation eco-system are set-up as for-profit corporations that the Israeli Government supports with a partial financial contribution and the remainder of the funding comes from the private sector. Private sector corporations compete through a RFP process for the opportunity to fund and operate an incubator.

At the conclusion of this meeting, the team then met with Israel Shamay, Head of America's operations and Liron Eldar, Program Manager, Industrial R&D Cooperation, North American Desk. A presentation was made by the Vaughan team that spoke directly to the advantages Vaughan has as the gateway to the Greater Toronto Area and a burgeoning market for cleantech and green industry. With a better understanding of Vaughan, both Israel and Liron were then able to identify how Vaughan might benefit from a relationship with the North American Desk. First, Liron informed us that they had been working with Canada's National Research Council (NRC) to set-up a joint Canadian/Israeli fund for end-users and that their office wanted to travel to Canada (Toronto) to present the fund and highlight the relationship with the NRC. Through this meeting we (Vaughan) have been able to request that the event be hosted in Vaughan. Since the mission follow-up information has been received from the Program Manager, Industrial R&D Cooperation and work by Economic Development Staff at securing the event is underway. Secondly, Canada has become a member of the Eureka Network and this was well received by Israel. Prior to the mission, staff were unaware of Canada's membership into the Eureka network. The EUREKA network is an intergovernmental network launched in 1985, to support market-oriented R&D and innovation projects by industry, research centres and universities across all technological sectors. It is composed of 41 members.

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#### **CleanTech 2012 – Companies shaping the future**

After attending the meetings at MATIMOP the group attended the Clean Tech Exhibition. The exhibition was smaller in size than anticipated due to the fact that the conference associated with the exhibition was the larger draw. However, the smaller size allowed for more conversation with companies that were set-up on the trade floor. Furthermore, the City had a pre-arranged meeting with one company who was exhibiting, Menolinx. Menolinx is a worldwide solution provider in the fields of energy efficiency, intelligent street lighting and smart grid solutions. Menolinx's LampID system was discussed as an opportunity for the City to further explore from a business and operational perspective. The LampID system installs on each and every pole (streetlight) in the city, a smart communication LampID node. This device together with the pole, are basically a communication point. The LampID system can be implemented either as an upgrade/retrofit or new lighting solution resulting in the reduction of energy and maintenance costs by between 30-70%. The second meeting that was prearranged for the day was off-site of the exhibition with Beemtech in the city of Rehovot, located approximately 40 minutes southwest of Tel Aviv. Beemtech is involved in the sector of energy conservation through a proprietary interior lighting solution that monitors and controls each individual ceiling mounted light fixture. Our meeting was with Shula Shinwell, Director of Marketing and Rafi Cohen, Lead Engineer. Beemtech recently entered the North American market with a sales and support office located in New York City. However, through the conversation, Beemtech identified a desire to meet further with Vaughan and determine an opportunity to expand into Canada. A meeting is being scheduled by staff to coordinate a follow-up meeting with Beemtech.

Upon completion of our meeting with Beemtech, Councillor Shefman arranged for an informal meeting in Tel Aviv with a Canadian company who is actively involved in facilitating business with Israeli companies. Harvey Knickerson, President of Coldspring Commerce was in Tel Aviv at the same time our delegation was there and gave us the opportunity to sit down and discuss the essentials of doing business with Israeli companies.

#### **Ramla - Vaughan's Friendship City**

Ramla is located approximately 45 minutes from Tel Aviv. Ramla and Vaughan officially signed a letter of friendship in 1993. Since that time a number of educational exchanges have taken place but the City, until now, had not undertaken an official visit to Israel. Prior to the mission, Ramla upon learning of our exploratory mission to Israel extended an invitation through the Mayor's Office for the representatives of the City to be hosted to a dinner while in Israel. Meeting with us from Ramla was; Yoel Lavi, Mayor, Amir Vider, Head of Strategic Planning and Absorption of Immigrants, Ofer Toder, Director General, Roni Barzilay, Spokesman and Manager of Municipal Communication Centre, Ayelet Cohen, Director of Education and Lianne Merkur, Head of Circle School. During the course of the dinner, Councillors Carella and Shefman were able to learn about a number of programs that are undertaken by Ramla to help keep their youth engaged in a positive environment throughout the summer months while school is on a break. Both Councillors will be discussing these initiatives directly with the City Manager and the appropriate Commissioners and their respective departments.

#### **Israel's Renewable Energy Centre: Eilat/Eliot**

Travel to Israel's most southerly city Eilat and the Eilat region required in country air travel. The flight time was approximately one hour and allowed for the Vaughan team to have a productive day of meetings and return to Tel Aviv the same day. Eilat, population of 46,600, is adjacent to the Egyptian village of Taba to the south, the Jordanian port city of Aqaba to the east, and within sight of Saudi Arabia to the south-east, across the gulf. Eilat has traditionally been known for its busy deep-water port as well as a popular resort, as it sits at the northern tip of the Red Sea, on the Gulf of Aqaba. More recently, Israel and the local municipality and other stakeholders are creating what is quickly becoming known at the "Silicon Valley" of renewable energy.

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Due to their remote geographic location, far from the urban centers and the subsequent professional opportunities of central Israel, the area has suffered from single-dimensional employment environments, a lack of educational opportunities, and services that often are not comparable to those available to residents of the center of the country. Committed to the advancement of the region on all levels, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has partnered with Eilat and Eilat, supporting successful initiatives that have empowered the area and its resident in higher Education; Educational System; Renewable Energy; Career Development Services & Healthcare.

**The Silicon Valley of Renewable Energy**

Strategic meetings were prescheduled prior to leaving Vaughan through UJA to meet with the Director of the Renewable Energy Initiative, Ms. Dorit Bennet. The meeting was very insightful in understanding how an innovative concept becomes a reality and an integral part of transforming a region.

Ms. Bennet explained that the Eilat – Eilat renewable energy project aspires to turn the region into an international center for development of technologies for production of renewable energy, while at the same time making the region energy independent, and free of fossil fuel and carbon emissions by 2020. This project will turn the region into one which imports energy to an energy exporter and one which will also serve as an international knowledge center, putting breakthrough technologies on display. The Renewable Energy Initiative coordinates all of the activity and is responsible for carrying out the strategic plan.

The project integrates all of the local entities, academic institutions in Israel, businesses from Israel and from around the world, financial funding groups, government ministries and government companies in order to leverage the field of renewable energy for regional development.

Thus far, the Renewable Energy Initiative has leveraged regional development: to create jobs, to develop technologies, to establish solar electricity fields, to develop training programs and academic programs, all of which have brought new residents to the region. The project has received both government and international recognition, and has become the cutting edge in the field of renewable energy in Israel.

**Next Generation Solar**

After the initial presentations at the Renewable Energy Initiative facility, the Vaughan team was taken on a tour of the Shikun and Binui testing facility. This is the first of a number of pilot sites to be set up in the region to provide a platform for validating Israeli technologies for the local and international marketplace. The site features what is called a solar trough, which eliminates silicon from the traditional approach of a solar panel. The concept has been deemed a success at the test site and practical application is now being developed. In addition to touring the Shikun and Binui testing site, Ms. Bennet arranged to meet with the head of the most successful solar installation in Israel, John Cohen, CEO, Arava Power Company. He explained how the project was initiated, built its funding model and encouraged global corporations such as Siemens to become a partner.

Following the majority of the day spent learning about the solar initiatives, United Jewish Appeal was able to secure a meeting with the Mayor of Eilat, Mr. Meir Yitzhak Ha Levi. Mr. Levi has been the Mayor since 2003 and has been instrumental in securing the Federal governments support of the renewable energy projects in addition to securing a new post-secondary institution to Eilat – Ben Gurion University. The Mayor explained that the renewable energy projects are giving the area an economic advantage but the University is key in growing the local labour force and keeping and giving the best and brightest a reason to stay or return to Eilat. The final meeting of the day took place at the Yoseftal Hospital.

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#### **United Jewish Appeal's Complete Economic Solution**

UJA Federation's partnership with Eilat and Eilat is focused on transforming Israel's southernmost communities into places of opportunity for high skilled Israelis. For the last three years, a core element of this vision has been ensuring that high quality health care is woven into the fabric of partnered communities. In order to accomplish this goal, UJA has partnered with Yoseftal Hospital on a \$6 million dollar capital project to create a state-of-the-art Emergency Medical Facility in Eilat. UJA has invested \$1 million dollars in the project and has leveraged \$5 million in support from the Israeli Government and Kupat Cholim Clalit (an Israeli HMO). Additionally, UJA is facilitating medical exchanges between medical professionals at Yoseftal and at Toronto hospitals, namely Mount Sinai. This meeting was important to facilitate as in the near future, Vaughan's UJA campus will be home to a large medical facility that is tied directly to Mount Sinai in downtown Toronto.

The full day in Eilat became an opportunity for the Vaughan team to better understand that a successful economic development initiative requires a holistic approach that includes education, all levels of government and the inclusion of the private sector.

#### **Ambassador of Canada to Israel**

The day began with a meeting with Mr. Paul Hunt, Ambassador for the Embassy of Canada to Israel and his lead economic and trade officer, Ms. Bonny Berger, Senior Trade Commissioner. The meeting was very open and the dialogue focused on doing business in Israel. Important take-aways from that meeting was that; Israeli's have little desire to meet with government officials without a business proposition, follow-up is critical to doing business with Israel, use of the Trade Commission should be natural first step, and that any work done in Israel is a reflection not only on the municipality but the Country.

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Hunt was very positive about the approach the City was taking by establishing itself through an exploratory mission to better identify the business of Israel and how to better take next steps.

#### **Better Place Electric Vehicles**

From this meeting the team had a pre-arranged meeting with Better Place. Better Place, the leading electric vehicle services provider in Israel, is accelerating the global transition to sustainable transportation. Better Place is building the infrastructure and intelligent network to deliver a range of services to drivers, enable widespread adoption of electric vehicles, and optimize energy use. The Better Place network addresses historical limitations to adoption by providing unlimited driving range in a convenient and accessible manner. The company works with all parts of the transportation ecosystem, including automakers, battery suppliers, energy companies, and the public sector, to create a compelling solution.

According to the Financial Times approximately 400 corporations in Israel have signed letters of intent to begin switching their fleets to the Better Place electric car network. This represents a potential of 80,000 electric cars. Better Place launched its first battery-swapping station in Israel, in Kiryat Ekron, near Rehovot in March 2011. The station is the first of approximately 40 stations to begin operating in the next two to three years. The battery exchange process takes five minutes.

The Province of Ontario has been involved in a pilot project with Better Place and further work is being done by staff to determine if an opportunity exists to work with the Province.

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#### **Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor**

Before the team left Jerusalem, which is home to the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, and many of the federal government offices, the Israeli consulate in Toronto had secured meetings with Oded Distel, Director of the Investment Promotion Center of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. The Investment Promotion Center serves as the marketing agency for foreign investments in Israel and as the focal point for foreign based companies and individuals who are interested in investigating direct investment and joint venture opportunities in Israel. Councillor Carella and Councillor Shefman were given the opportunity in the meeting to deliver a succinct overview of Vaughan and throughout the conversation the advantages of Vaughan and its ability to be a gateway were communicated. Mr. Distel was very encouraged at the approach the City was taking in its international business development efforts with Israel by leading a small exploratory mission to the country. After learning about Vaughan, he was very open to receiving a full business delegation and has offered the full assistance of his office in arranging business-to-business meetings and other aspects related to bringing a larger business contingency from Vaughan.

At the conclusion of the meeting with the Investment Promotion Center of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor the group departed Jerusalem to Caesarea to meet with Caesarstone.

#### **Caesarstone International**

The primary purpose of this meeting was to meet with Caesarstone executive management, Yosef (Yos) Shiran – CEO and Eli Feiglin, Vice President Marketing to discuss the opportunity that Vaughan might be considered as a location for a North American manufacturing facility. Caesarstone currently has a location in Vaughan and employees more than 40 people. The Vaughan location is one of the largest sales and distribution locations outside of the Israeli manufacturing facility. Currently all product is manufactured in Kibbutz Sdot – Yam, Israel (Caesarea and located about 45 minutes north of Tel Aviv) and shipped around the world.

Caesarstone is the first quartz manufacturing company to receive the ISO 14001 certification - a standard which recognizes environmental management and performance. Their products meet the American Greenguard exacting standards, and have been credited by the NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) for having surfaces safe enough for use in laboratories, healthcare facilities, and food preparation environments.

In addition, the recycled quartz stone surfaces contains up to 42% reclaimed quartz –which makes an impact on preserving the world's resources. Caesarstone-patented process, is unique in the marketplace as it takes the innate strength of quartz and combine it with numerous polymers and pigments to create custom surfaces not achievable through other processes. The Caesarstone product is also resistant to stains, scratches and cracks, and is highly heat-resistant.

During the meeting a competitive set of advantages about Vaughan were presented. However, Mr. Shiran said that the company was further investigating a location in the Southern United States. The advantages to that location given by Mr. Shiran were initial property/state tax incentives, manufacturing incentives for capital investment and cost of utilities. Although the prospect of landing this manufacturing facility is distant, staff in the economic development department will continue to research comparative information for our location as compared to jurisdictions such as the Southern United States to better position Vaughan in future location decisions.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

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

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**Regional Implications**

N/A

**Conclusion**

The ongoing global economic downturns have changed business conduct of firms and companies all over the world. During the course of the exploratory business mission it was evident that adjustments in Israel have been made as well. Therefore, business in Israel still looks promising.

What was learned while in Israel is that throughout the past two decades, many international companies and corporations have been entering the Israeli market by establishing branches or independent companies in Israel. However, initial review may lead to the notion that doing business in Israel is not profitable and might be even risky. Again, throughout the mission a deeper understanding of the Israeli market and the Israeli reality contradicted that assumption.

Israel is a unique country which holds a unique market. Although Israel isn't abundant with natural resources and its geo-politic situation is quite complicated, there are many factors which make conducting business in Israel to be a worthwhile venture.

The City through the exploratory business mission was able to create a solid understanding of the business climate, forge new relationships with government agencies in Israel and begin to build a local stakeholder base that encourages the City to place more emphasis on Israel as a point of international business development through the economic development office.

**Attachments**

Attachment A – Official Itinerary  
Attachment B – Photo Gallery  
Attachment C – News Clippings – Post Mission

**Report prepared by:**

Tim Simmonds, Director of Economic Development

(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.)



## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – SEPTEMBER 4, 2012**

### **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXPLORATORY MISSION TO ISRAEL – POST MISSION UPDATE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with Ward 2 Councillor, Ward 5 Councillor and the City Manager, recommend that:

1. This report be received;
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#### **Economic Impact**

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#### **Ramla - Vaughan's Friendship City**

Ramla is located approximately 45 minutes from Tel Aviv. Ramla and Vaughan officially signed a letter of friendship in 1993. Since that time a number of educational exchanges have taken place but the City, until now, had not undertaken an official visit to Israel. Prior to the mission, Ramla

upon learning of our exploratory mission to Israel extended an invitation through the Mayor's Office for the representatives of the City to be hosted to a dinner while in Israel. Meeting with us from Ramla was; Yoel Lavi, Mayor, Amir Vider, Head of Strategic Planning and Absorption of Immigrants, Ofer Toder, Director General, Roni Barzilay, Spokesman and Manager of Municipal Communication Centre, Ayelet Cohen, Director of Education and Lianne Merkur, Head of Circle School. During the course of the dinner, Councillors Carella and Shefman were able to learn about a number of programs that are undertaken by Ramla to help keep their youth engaged in a positive environment throughout the summer months while school is on a break. Both Councillors will be discussing these initiatives directly with the City Manager and the appropriate Commissioners and their respective departments.

### **Israel's Renewable Energy Centre: Eilat/Eliot**

Travel to Israel's most southerly city Eilat and the Eilat region required in country air travel. The flight time was approximately one hour and allowed for the Vaughan team to have a productive day of meetings and return to Tel Aviv the same day. Eilat, population of 46,600, is adjacent to the Egyptian village of Taba to the south, the Jordanian port city of Aqaba to the east, and within sight of Saudi Arabia to the south-east, across the gulf. Eilat has traditionally been known for its busy deep-water port as well as a popular resort, as it sits at the northern tip of the Red Sea, on the Gulf of Aqaba. More recently, Israel and the local municipality and other stakeholders are creating what is quickly becoming known as the "Silicon Valley" of renewable energy.

Due to their remote geographic location, far from the urban centers and the subsequent professional opportunities of central Israel, the area has suffered from single-dimensional employment environments, a lack of educational opportunities, and services that often are not comparable to those available to residents of the center of the country. Committed to the advancement of the region on all levels, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has partnered with Eilat and Eilat, supporting successful initiatives that have empowered the area and its residents in higher Education; Educational System; Renewable Energy; Career Development Services & Healthcare.

### **The Silicon Valley of Renewable Energy**

Strategic meetings were prescheduled prior to leaving Vaughan through UJA to meet with the Director of the Renewable Energy Initiative, Ms. Dorit Bennet. The meeting was very insightful in understanding how an innovative concept becomes a reality and an integral part of transforming a region.

Ms. Bennet explained that the Eilat – Eilat renewable energy project aspires to turn the region into an international center for development of technologies for production of renewable energy, while at the same time making the region energy independent, and free of fossil fuel and carbon emissions by 2020. This project will turn the region into one which imports energy to an energy exporter and one which will also serve as an international knowledge center, putting breakthrough technologies on display. The Renewable Energy Initiative coordinates all of the activity and is responsible for carrying out the strategic plan.

The project integrates all of the local entities, academic institutions in Israel, businesses from Israel and from around the world, financial funding groups, government ministries and government companies in order to leverage the field of renewable energy for regional development.

Thus far, the Renewable Energy Initiative has leveraged regional development: to create jobs, to develop technologies, to establish solar electricity fields, to develop training programs and academic programs, all of which have brought new residents to the region. The project has received both government and international recognition, and has become the cutting edge in the field of renewable energy in Israel.

### **Next Generation Solar**

After the initial presentations at the Renewable Energy Initiative facility, the Vaughan team was taken on a tour of the Shikun and Binui testing facility. This is the first of a number of pilot sites to be set up in the region to provide a platform for validating Israeli technologies for the local and international marketplace. The site features what is called a solar trough, which eliminates silicon from the traditional approach of a solar panel. The concept has been deemed a success at the test site and practical application is now being developed. In addition to touring the Shikun and Binui testing site, Ms. Bennet arranged to meet with the head of the most successful solar installation in Israel, John Cohen, CEO, Arava Power Company. He explained how the project was initiated, built its funding model and encouraged global corporations such as Siemens to become a partner.

Following the majority of the day spent learning about the solar initiatives, United Jewish Appeal was able to secure a meeting with the Mayor of Eilat, Mr. Meir Yitzhak Ha Levi. Mr. Levi has been the Mayor since 2003 and has been instrumental in securing the Federal governments support of the renewable energy projects in addition to securing a new post-secondary institution to Eilat – Ben Gurion University. The Mayor explained that the renewable energy projects are giving the area an economic advantage but the University is key in growing the local labour force and keeping and giving the best and brightest a reason to stay or return to Eilat. The final meeting of the day took place at the Yoseftal Hospital.

### **United Jewish Appeal's Complete Economic Solution**

UJA Federation's partnership with Eilat and Eilat is focused on transforming Israel's southernmost communities into places of opportunity for high skilled Israelis. For the last three years, a core element of this vision has been ensuring that high quality health care is woven into the fabric of partnered communities. In order to accomplish this goal, UJA has partnered with Yoseftal Hospital on a \$6 million dollar capital project to create a state-of-the-art Emergency Medical Facility in Eilat. UJA has invested \$1 million dollars in the project and has leveraged \$5 million in support from the Israeli Government and Kupat Cholim Clalit (an Israeli HMO). Additionally, UJA is facilitating medical exchanges between medical professionals at Yoseftal and at Toronto hospitals, namely Mount Sinai. This meeting was important to facilitate as in the near future, Vaughan's UJA campus will be home to a large medical facility that is tied directly to Mount Sinai in downtown Toronto.

The full day in Eilat became an opportunity for the Vaughan team to better understand that a successful economic development initiative requires a holistic approach that includes education, all levels of government and the inclusion of the private sector.

### **Ambassador of Canada to Israel**

The day began with a meeting with Mr. Paul Hunt, Ambassador for the Embassy of Canada to Israel and his lead economic and trade officer, Ms. Bonny Berger, Senior Trade Commissioner. The meeting was very open and the dialogue focused on doing business in Israel. Important take-aways from that meeting was that; Israeli's have little desire to meet with government officials without a business proposition, follow-up is critical to doing business with Israel, use of the Trade Commission should be natural first step, and that any work done in Israel is a reflection not only on the municipality but the Country.

At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Hunt was very positive about the approach the City was taking by establishing itself through an exploratory mission to better identify the business of Israel and how to better take next steps.

### **Better Place Electric Vehicles**

From this meeting the team had a pre-arranged meeting with Better Place. Better Place, the leading electric vehicle services provider in Israel, is accelerating the global transition to sustainable transportation. Better Place is building the infrastructure and intelligent network to deliver a range of services to drivers, enable widespread adoption of electric vehicles, and

optimize energy use. The Better Place network addresses historical limitations to adoption by providing unlimited driving range in a convenient and accessible manner. The company works with all parts of the transportation ecosystem, including automakers, battery suppliers, energy companies, and the public sector, to create a compelling solution.

According to the Financial Times approximately 400 corporations in Israel have signed letters of intent to begin switching their fleets to the Better Place electric car network. This represents a potential of 80,000 electric cars. Better Place launched its first battery-swapping station in Israel, in Kiryat Ekron, near Rehovot in March 2011. The station is the first of approximately 40 stations to begin operating in the next two to three years. The battery exchange process takes five minutes.

The Province of Ontario has been involved in a pilot project with Better Place and further work is being done by staff to determine if an opportunity exists to work with the Province.

### **Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor**

Before the team left Jerusalem, which is home to the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, and many of the federal government offices, the Israeli consulate in Toronto had secured meetings with Oded Distel, Director of the Investment Promotion Center of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. The Investment Promotion Center serves as the marketing agency for foreign investments in Israel and as the focal point for foreign based companies and individuals who are interested in investigating direct investment and joint venture opportunities in Israel. Councillor Carella and Councillor Shefman were given the opportunity in the meeting to deliver a succinct overview of Vaughan and throughout the conversation the advantages of Vaughan and its ability to be a gateway were communicated. Mr. Distel was very encouraged at the approach the City was taking in its international business development efforts with Israel by leading a small exploratory mission to the country. After learning about Vaughan, he was very open to receiving a full business delegation and has offered the full assistance of his office in arranging business-to-business meetings and other aspects related to bringing a larger business contingency from Vaughan.

At the conclusion of the meeting with the Investment Promotion Center of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor the group departed Jerusalem to Caesarea to meet with Caesarstone.

### **Caesarstone International**

The primary purpose of this meeting was to meet with Caesarstone executive management, Yosef (Yos) Shiran – CEO and Eli Feiglin, Vice President Marketing to discuss the opportunity that Vaughan might be considered as a location for a North American manufacturing facility. Caesarstone currently has a location in Vaughan and employees more than 40 people. The Vaughan location is one of the largest sales and distribution locations outside of the Israeli manufacturing facility. Currently all product is manufactured in Kibbutz Sdot – Yam, Israel (Caesarea and located about 45 minutes north of Tel Aviv) and shipped around the world.

Caesarstone is the first quartz manufacturing company to receive the ISO 14001 certification - a standard which recognizes environmental management and performance. Their products meet the American Greenguard exacting standards, and have been credited by the NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) for having surfaces safe enough for use in laboratories, healthcare facilities, and food preparation environments.

In addition, the recycled quartz stone surfaces contains up to 42% reclaimed quartz –which makes an impact on preserving the world's resources. Caesarstone-patented process, is unique in the marketplace as it takes the innate strength of quartz and combine it with numerous polymers and pigments to create custom surfaces not achievable through other processes. The Caesarstone product is also resistant to stains, scratches and cracks, and is highly heat-resistant.

During the meeting a competitive set of advantages about Vaughan were presented. However, Mr. Shiran said that the company was further investigating a location in the Southern United States. The advantages to that location given by Mr. Shiran were initial property/state tax incentives, manufacturing incentives for capital investment and cost of utilities. Although the prospect of landing this manufacturing facility is distant, staff in the economic development department will continue to research comparative information for our location as compared to jurisdictions such as the Southern United States to better position Vaughan in future location decisions.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

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

### **Regional Implications**

N/A

### **Conclusion**

The ongoing global economic downturns have changed business conduct of firms and companies all over the world. During the course of the exploratory business mission it was evident that adjustments in Israel have been made as well. Therefore, business in Israel still looks promising.

What was learned while in Israel is that throughout the past two decades, many international companies and corporations have been entering the Israeli market by establishing branches or independent companies in Israel. However, initial review may lead to the notion that doing business in Israel is not profitable and might be even risky. Again, throughout the mission a deeper understanding of the Israeli market and the Israeli reality contradicted that assumption.

Israel is a unique country which holds a unique market. Although Israel isn't abundant with natural resources and its geo-politic situation is quite complicated, there are many factors which make conducting business in Israel to be a worthwhile venture.

The City through the exploratory business mission was able to create a solid understanding of the business climate, forge new relationships with government agencies in Israel and begin to build a local stakeholder base that encourages the City to place more emphasis on Israel as a point of international business development through the economic development office.

### **Attachments**

Attachment A – Official Itinerary  
Attachment B – Photo Gallery  
Attachment C – News Clippings – Post Mission

### **Report prepared by:**

Tim Simmonds, Director of Economic Development

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Simmonds  
Director of Economic Development

## Attachment A



### INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### EXPLORATORY MISSION TO ISRAEL

**JULY 2 – 9, 2012**

### ITINERARY

**IN CONSULTATION WITH UNITED JEWISH APPEAL OF GREATER TORONTO & ISRAELI CONSULATE - TORONTO**

#### **MONDAY, JUNE 25**

- Pre – Mission Press Release

#### **MONDAY, JULY 2**

- 1:45 p.m. Arrive at Pearson International Airport, Terminal 1
- 2:00 p.m. Meet at Check-In Counter H – Group Photograph (with Canada/Israel hat).
- 2:05 p.m. Proceed to appropriate check in counter  
Air Canada Lounge (Voucher included in E-Ticket)
- 5:45 p.m. Depart Toronto, Air Canada Flight AC084 – Direct Flight – Flying Time 10 hrs 55 min



**TUESDAY, JULY 3**

- 11:40 a.m. Arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport, Tel Aviv, Terminal 3  
*VIP airport assistance through passport control (will have a name sign- representative will take group to driver)*  
  
*Transfer by driver to the Sheraton Hotel in Tel-Aviv – Travel time - 30 min.*
- 2:30 p.m. Check-In - Sheraton Hotel, 115 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner and Evening at leisure in Old Jaffa or the “Tachana”  
Arrange for taxi service
- Evening Review next day itinerary (Casual)

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel, 115 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 4**

- 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast at the Hotel with Col. (Ret) Miri Eisin who will provide an update on the mood of the country.  
(Breakfast included with hotel)
- 8:40 a.m. *Transfer by driver to Matimop, Industry House, 29 Hamered St., Tel Aviv – Travel Time 10 mins*
- 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. Meeting with Yossi Smoler, Director of Technological Incubators Program, Office of the Chief Scientist, MATIMOP, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor
- 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Meeting with Israel Shamay, Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Head of the Americas Operations, MATIMOP  
  
*Transfer by driver to the Israeli Trade and Convention Centre, Travel Time 15 mins*
- 11:30 a.m. Attend the Clean Tech Exhibition  
*Confirmation Numbers: 10022, 23250, 30243*
- 1:30 p.m. Meeting with Menolinx – Menolinx Booth at Clean Tech Exhibition
- 2:15 p.m. *Transfer by driver to Beemtech, 10 Prof. Menachem Plaut, Rehovot, 76706, Travel Time 30 min*
- 3:00 p.m. Meeting with Shula Shinwell, Marketing Coordinator, Beemtech.
- 4:15 p.m. *Transfer by driver to Sheraton Hotel – Taxi Service, Travel Time 35 min*
- 6:45 p.m. *Driver to pick up Delegation at Sheraton Hotel*  
*Transfer to Kimmel Restaurant, 6th Hashachar Str., Tel Aviv – Travel Time 8 min*

- 7:00 p.m.                      Dinner Reception with Ramla Officials   Ramla – Mayor Yoel Lavi  
   *To be accompanied by Mr. Ofer Todder, CEO; Yossi Gold, Strategic Manager, Morith Drori;  
   Ronnie Barzilai, Spokesperson; Lianne Merkur, Circle School Ramla*
- 8:30 p.m.                      *Transfer by driver to Sheraton Hotel Tel Aviv - Approximately 8 mins*

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel, 115 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv**

**THURSDAY, JULY 5**

**DAY TRIP TO EILAT/EILOT (Coordinated by UJA Federation)**

- 6:00 a.m. Early breakfast at the hotel (Breakfast included with hotel)
- 6:30 a.m. *Transfer by driver to Sde Dov Airport, Travel Time 15 mins*
- 8:10 a.m. Sde Dov Airport, Israir Flight to Eilat, Flight 6h 425 – Confirmation #1721748  
Flying Time 1 hr 20 min
- 9:30 a.m. Arrival at Eilat Airport  
Richard Summers, UJA to accompany group for day in Eilat/Eilot Region
- 9:45 a.m. Travel to Eilot Regional Council
- 10:15 a.m. Briefing by Professor Dorit Banet, Director of the Eilat/Eilot renewable energy initiative and Noam Ilan,  
VP Business Development Capital Nature Technological Centre
- 11:00 a.m. Tour of “Shikun and Binui” pilot site

*Travel to Kibbutz Keturah*

- 11:30 a.m. Presentation by Dr Tariq Abu Hamed, Academic Director of the Center for Renewable Energy and Energy  
Preservation, on the topic of academic research and development and the renewable solar Validation Center

*Travel to Eilat*

- 1:30 p.m. At the Denis Kingdom (Local Restaurant – courtesy of UJA)

- 2:30 p.m. Presentation by Willian Coven of the National Mariculture Centre regarding Bio technology applied research in Eilat region
- 3:30 p.m. Greetings by Eilat Mayor, Meir Yitzhak Ha Levi (TBC)
- 4:15 p.m. Visit to Yoseftal Hospital and Presentation by Miri Gavriello, Chief of Nursing
- 5:10 p.m. Transfer to Eilat Airport
- 6:30 p.m. Israil flight back to Sde Dov, Flight 6H 454 – Confirmation # 1721503  
Flying Time 1 hr
- 7:30 p.m. Arrive at Sde Dov Airport, Tel Aviv
- 7:45 p.m. *Transfer by driver to Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv (Travel Time 15 mins)*

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel, Tel-Aviv**

**FRIDAY, JULY 6**

ACCOMPANIED BY ITZIK HARANI, GUIDE

- Morning      Breakfast at the hotel with the Paul Hunt, Canadian Ambassador
- 9:15 a.m.      *Transfer to Herzlia by Itzik Harani, Guide, Travel Time 25 mins*
- 10:00 a.m.      Visit to Better Place, Pi Gliloy Compound, Ramat Hasharon
- Noon          Sabbath Begins
- Lunch          En Route
- Afternoon      Visit to Nahalat Binyamin Arts and Crafts
- Afternoon      “White Tel-Aviv” - Walking tour of historical Tel Aviv
- Dinner          At the hotel or at a local restaurant

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel, Tel-Aviv**

**SATURDAY, JULY 7**

ACCOMPANIED BY ITZIK HARANI, GUIDE

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast at the hotel (Breakfast included with hotel)
- 8:00 a.m. Check Out of the hotel (bring all luggage)

*Transfer to Jerusalem Itzik Harani, Guide, Travel Time 1 hr.*

- 9:00 a.m. Walking Tour
- Noon Light Lunch at the Old City
- 1:30 p.m. Visit to the Israel Museum
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner at a local restaurant

*Transfer to Mamilla Hotel* followed by Check in

- 10:00 p.m. Attend the Sound and Light Show at the Citadel

**Overnight: Mamilla Hotel, 11 King Solomon St, Jerusalem**

**SUNDAY, JULY 8**

ACCOMPANIED BY ITZIK HARANI, GUIDE

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast at the hotel (Breakfast included with hotel)
- 8:15 a.m. Check Out of Hotel

*Transfer to Yad Vashem by Itzik Harani, Guide, Travel Time 20 mins*

- 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Visit Yad Vashem

*Transfer to New Tech Office, 5 Bank St, Jerusalem, by Itzik Harani, Travel Time 15 mins*

- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. Meeting with Oded Distel, Director of Israel New Tech from Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour Foreign Trade Administration
- 12:30 p.m. *Transfer to Caesarstone to include lunch and short visit to archeological park by Itzik Harani, Guide Kibbutz Sdot Yam, D.N. Menashe 37804, Travel Time 1 hour*

- 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Meeting and Tour of Caesarstone, Tour hosted by Giora Wegman, Vice CEO

*Transfer to Restaurant in Caesarea, Travel time 5 mins.*

- 5:15-6:30 p.m. Dinner in Caesarea, hosted by Yos Shiran, CEO and Eli Feiglin, VP of Marketing, Caesarstone.

*Transfer by driver to Hotel, Sheraton Tel-Aviv*

- Evening Check-In at Hotel, Sheraton Tel Aviv

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel, 115 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv**



**MONDAY, JULY 9**

- Morning Breakfast at the hotel followed by check out
- 10:20 a.m. *Transfer by driver to Ben Gurion International Airport, Travel Time 30 mins.*
- 10:50 a.m. Arrive at Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv, Terminal 3  
*VIP airport assistance through passport control (UJA)*
- 1:10 p.m. Depart Tel Aviv, Air Canada Flight AC085
- 6:30 p.m. Arrive in Toronto, Pearson International Airport, Terminal 1

## ATTACHMENT B

International Business Development - Israel | July 2-9, 2012



**CleanTech Exhibition 2012**



### **Ramla - Friendship City**

**L to R:** Ayelet Cohen, Director, Education; Yoel Lavi, Mayor of Ramla, ; Lianne Merkur, Head of School, Circle School; Amir Vider, Strategic Planning; Roni Barzilay, Municipal Communication; Ofer Toder, Director General, Ward 2, Councillor Tony Carella; Ward 5, Councillor Alan Shefman.





**Shikun and Binul Testing Facility: Eilat, Israel - Solar Trough**

**L to R:** Dorit Bennet, Director, Renewable Energy Initiative; Ward 5 Councillor, Alan Shefman; John Cohen, Ward 2 Councillor, Tony Carella; Tim Simmonds, Director, Economic Development



**Meeting with Ambassador Paul Hunt**

**L to R:** Tim Simmonds, Director, Economic Development; Ward 5 Councillor, Tony Carella; Ambassador Paul Hunt; Ward 5 Councillor, Alan Shefman; Senior Trade Commissioner, Bonny Berger

## Attachment C

City of Vaughan

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# Vaughan Delegation Heads to Israel to Explore Cleantech and Innovation

Monday, 25 June 2012

The City of Vaughan is sending a three person delegation to Israel as part of an exploratory business mission July 2 to July 9. The mission coincides with the CleanTech 2012 Exhibition in Tel Aviv.

"As a growing city, we must project the strengths and potential of our community to an international audience," said Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua. "It is vital that we maintain a competitive advantage in today's global economy and this requires innovation and forward thinking. This business mission to Israel will allow us to see first-hand the advances being made in the areas of sustainable water, energy and environmental technologies."

The delegation will consist of Ward 2 Councillor Tony Carella, Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman and the Director of Economic Development, Tim Simmonds. The week-long mission will include time at the CleanTech 2012 Exhibition in Tel Aviv, where the delegation has pre-arranged business meetings with a number of Israeli Clean Technology firms.

The delegation has also secured meetings with the Director of Technological Incubators Program, Office of the Chief Scientist, MATIMOP and the Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Head of the Americas Operations. During the week, the delegation will travel to the cities of Eilat/Eilat, in the southern region of Israel, which is now considered the 'Silicon Valley' of renewable energy. The delegation is also meeting with Paul Hunt, Canada's Ambassador to Israel, as well as Mayor Yoel Lavi of Ramla, Vaughan's Friendship City since 1993.

"The City of Vaughan's Economic Development Strategy encourages international business development to help achieve a more prosperous future for our residents and businesses," said City Manager Clayton Harris. "The primary goal is to position Vaughan as the gateway for economic activity in the Greater Toronto area and the second goal is to enable entrepreneurial activity. As such, Israel is a country that presents a number of opportunities for the City."

Israel boasts the highest density of start-up companies in the world and its broader economy has grown faster than the average of the world's developed countries. CleanTech 2012 in Tel Aviv is now considered the preeminent event for the clean technology industry.

Address article on the site [www.vaughan.ca](http://www.vaughan.ca):  
[http://www.vaughan.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=771&Itemid=1193](http://www.vaughan.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=771&Itemid=1193)

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## **Trade mission to Israel fruitful, Vaughan reps say**

**By Adam Martin-Robbins**

July 26, 2012

An exploratory business trip to Israel proved "extremely fruitful," according to the three city representatives who took part.

Director of economic development Tim Simmonds, Woodbridge West Councillor Tony Carella and Thornhill Councillor Alan Shefman visited the booming Middle Eastern nation from July 2 to 9.

"I think, from an overall perspective, the exploratory mission was incredibly successful, but it's now when the work begins," Mr. Simmonds said. "It has given me enough insight to now put together a business plan request to council to start to grow this."

The trio attended the CleanTech 2012 Exhibition in Tel Aviv and also met with a number of private companies as well as a slew of government officials including Paul Hunt, Canada's ambassador to Israel, and Yoel Lavi Mayor of Vaughan's "friendship city" Ramla.

"We brought back a lot of stuff and a lot of leads to pursue," Mr. Carella said. "I think the critical thing was, instead of seeing advancing trade as a three or four or five-step process, I think we managed to come to an understanding that it might look like three, but it's really 30. Every step is incremental. There's no grand opportunity that's just waiting there to be seized full-blown. You really build on this."

During the trip, the three men met with representatives of MATIMOP — Israel's industry and trade office — who are currently working with the governments of Canada and Ontario on a joint research and development funding program for Israeli and Canadian companies.

"They want to bring a large workshop, knowledge-based event to the GTA, we immediately put Vaughan on the map for that," Mr. Simmonds said.

The mayor of Ramla has also contacted the city since the trio's return to inform them of a group that is interested in importing certain brands of vehicles purchased from Vaughan dealers.

Both of those opportunities came out of face-to-face meetings, Mr. Simmonds said.

"From a business perspective those are two things we never expected to come back with," he said. "We found the face-to-face network time absolutely incredible and important in this whole process."

Those meetings also provided a lot of insight into the mindset of Israeli business people, who have a strong "entrepreneurial spirit," Mr. Shefman said.

"This was really to find out what the lay of the land is," he said. "We think we have certain attributes here, that are of interest if you like, but we knew, even with our research, very little about the business environment, innovation environment, the tech environment of Israel."

The group went in to the trip with the aim of learning what interest, if any, Israeli businesses have in exporting products as well as to gain a sense of "their perceptions of Canada as a place to do business" and to gain a better understanding of the process involved in doing business between Canada and Israel, Mr. Shefman said.

"Every one of those issues we were at least given insight into them and getting some pretty interesting answers to those questions," he said.

Mr. Shefman said there appears to be a lot of potential to develop connections between Vaughan's construction industry and some of the innovative, "green technology" firms in Israel.

"Israel is booming. I think there is great potential for that industry (construction) in Israel today," he said. "If we can make those connections for our businesses that's fabulous."

The budget for the trip was approximately \$15,000 or \$5,000 each. And Mr. Shefman said it was worth every penny.

"It's absolutely crystal clear to me that you need to invest dollars to be a player in international economic development, that's number one," he said. "The dollars are clearly an investment, that's number two. I can see that ultimately, over time, that there will be an enormous, fabulous pay back to our city by investing in international development."

In fact, Mr. Shefman said the trip opened his eyes to the fact that if Vaughan wants to be a player on the international business stage, it has to step up its game.

"I think we need to invest and I can tell you that I'm surely going to urge my colleagues that we need to invest more than we are spending (on economic development) and I'm not talking trips," he said.

He'd like to see more money invested in hiring economic development staff.

"Probably, one of the strongest messages I got out of this was that if you really want to develop economic ties internationally, and I imagine other countries are similar, you've got to be very serious," he said. "You've got to

make a commitment to do it and you've got to have a very clear plan of how you're going to go about doing it. ... You can't dabble because the competition is just overwhelming."

Mr. Shefman said he plans to host a workshop at city hall for interested members of the Israeli-Canadian business community in the GTA to discuss what he learned and explore future opportunities.

In addition to learning a lot about the Israeli business community and potential economic opportunities, Mr. Carella also picked up some information about a "very successful" program for teens in Ramla that may prove fruitful in Vaughan, which he plans on discussing with the head of the city's recreation department.

Mr. Simmonds, meanwhile, will be developing a plan that builds on the information they gathered and the groundwork that was laid during the trip in the coming months.

"There's a lot of meat on the bone to go back and create that business plan to strategize on how we grow the Israeli relationship," he said.

Mr. Simmonds noted Vaughan has a number of advantages it can emphasize in its bid to prove attractive to Israeli businesses.

"One of the most important factors for Israelis business to do business in North America is what is the Israeli community like? And we have one of the largest, most supportive ex-pat Israeli, Jewish communities in North America right here in Vaughan," Mr. Simmonds said.

Vaughan can also promote the fact that it is ideally situated along three 400 series highways and is home to two massive railroad hubs with reach into the United States and across Canada.

"We want to make the city known as the logical entry and exit point," he said.

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# The Canadian Jewish news

Thursday, August 23, 2012

Member Login:

Email: \*  Postal Code: \*

Shabbat times for Toronto

Candle lighting: 7:48pm on Friday, 24 Aug 2012

This week's Torah portion is Parashat Shoftim

Havdalah (45 min): 8:50pm on Saturday, 25 Aug 2012

Shabbat times for Montreal

5th of Elul, 5772

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## Vaughan promotes business opportunities in Israel

Andy Levy-Aizenkopf, Staff Reporter, Monday, July 30, 2012

Tags: News Canada

0 Comments



From left, Tim Simmonds, Tony Carella, Canadian Ambassador Paul Hunt, Alan Shefman and Donny Berger, trade commissioner for the Canadian Embassy in Israel.

Three City of Vaughan officials visited Israel earlier this month as part of a plan to target the Jewish state as a major business partner for companies located in the Toronto suburb.

Alan Shefman, councillor for Ward 5 -- Thornhill, Tony Carella, councillor for Ward 2 -- Woodbridge, and Tim Simmonds, Vaughan's director of economic development, went to Israel on an "exploratory economic mission" to seek potential partners for joint business ventures, Shefman said.

Speaking to The CJN after his return, Shefman said he's been urging Vaughan to look to Israel for business opportunities, particularly in the technology sector.

In 2011 the city decided to promote expanded economic ties with companies and start-ups in China, Italy and Israel, Shefman said.

"We had ties to China and Italy, but Israel was the new one," he said. "Vaughan has large Chinese, Italian and Jewish constituencies. We went to get a sense of the business dynamics that could exist between us. Our main interest is in green tech."

Shefman led the week-long trip to Israel from July 4 to 11.

While there, the three Vaughan officials met with many private business leaders, as well as representatives of MATIMOP -- Israel's national agency for industrial research and development, and its Global Center for Breakthrough Innovation. They also had a briefing with Canada's ambassador to Israel, Paul Hunt.

The trip was organized with help from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Israeli consulate.

Hunt advised the Vaughan delegation that they needed to approach potential Israeli business partners "seriously and aggressively," Shefman said.

"He told us that Israelis want to see commitment from Canadians, and not just shake hands with yet another delegation who will then disappear for two years."

Which is why Shefman, Carella and Simmonds will be briefing Vaughan Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua on their findings and will propose a return trip to Israel this fall that would include the mayor, Shefman said.

"Vaughan needs to be known in Israel, and we're going to make sure they know us," he said.

Shefman said the city plans to educate its business community about existing mechanisms to enhance Canadian-Israeli business ventures, such as the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF) and its Ontario-Israel Collaboration Program (OICP).

The latter was launched as part of a memorandum of understanding between Ontario and Israel in 2005 and is now starting to bear fruit.

The OICP recently put out a call for proposals from Ontario and Israeli businesses that want to develop "innovative products or processes. Special consideration will be given to projects in the following four areas:

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Successful Ontario applicants are eligible to receive up to \$300,000 or up to 50 per cent of the research and development costs of technology-based products and processes from the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation through CIIRDF to fund the Ontario portion of each project.

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