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DEPUTATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORKING SESSION
JUNE 1st, 2016

Your Worship, Chair and Members of Council:

Good morning.

C 12 COMMUNICATION
CW (WORKING SESSION) June 1/16
ITEM - 1

My name is Isabella Ferrara and I am the President of the Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (commonly known as S.A.V.I.) the umbrella organization that is the voice of over 3,850 seniors and the 15 clubs in the City of Vaughan listed in this deputation.

1. Concord West Seniors Club
2. Filipino Seniors Club
3. First Chinese Senior Association of Vaughan
4. The Giuseppe Garibaldi Seniors Club
5. Maple Italo Canadian Club
6. Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club
7. Pinecrest Seniors Club
8. Thornhill Seniors Club
9. Thornhill African Caribbean Canadian Seniors Club
10. East Woodbridge Seniors Club
11. Pine York Seniors Club
12. Sonoma Heights Seniors Club
13. Vellore Village Seniors Club
14. West Woodbridge Seniors Club
15. Woodbridge Macedonian Seniors Club

I thank you for the opportunity of presenting this deputation today.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank you for the continuous support that our member clubs receive from Council as well as staff from the Recreation Division of Community Services, headed by Deputy City Manager, Mary Realì.

From the copy of the Deputation that has been circulated to you, you will see that SAVI's rich history of providing programs and services, include:

1. an annual Seniorsfest, that serves in excess of 1,300 seniors
2. deputations and summits, engaging well over 800 seniors and resulting in:
 - the introduction of the Property Tax Rebate for seniors
 - the Ontario Provincial Pension Plan
 - and continues advocacy at the Federal Level for pension reform
3. annual Holiday Concerts

4. record-breaking food drives and donations for the Vaughan Food Bank
5. in excess of \$14,000 donation for the Vaughan hospital to date, and
6. an annual Seniors Information and Exhibition Fair, coming up on June 10th

What SAVI has accomplished so far

- April 13- BingoRama held at Vellore Village Community Centre, an annual fundraising event in support of the Mackenzie Hospital Foundation. So far a total of \$14,485.00 has been collected for this cause.
- April 19– Volunteer Recognition Ceremony held at East Woodbridge Seniors Club, recognized 91 seniors for their contribution of time and effort with SAVI events.
- A Fundraising BingoRama for City of Vaughan REC Assist Program, which raised \$1,200.
- On September 11 – Cultural Festival- which event will take place at the Fontana Primavera Event Venue, with approximately 1,000 seniors to be in attendance.
- To date, we have contributed a total of \$9,587 to the Vaughan Food Bank. We also hold the record for the highest contribution (80 bins) of non-perishable food items.
- Our last annual event, the Holiday Concert it is always held at the City Playhouse. All proceeds from this event go directly to the Vaughan Food Bank.

So far the seniors have donated in total \$25,322.00

- Completed the Deputation, which is being presented here today.

Some of these programs were realized solely through the help of grants that SAVI was successful in receiving. We recognize that only through financial support can some programs continue to be available, such as the computer training sessions and the professional entertainment at Seniorsfest and Holiday Concert.

SAVI's 14-year history is well known and recognized. It has established good working relationships with other known organizations, such as Vaughan Community Health Centre, CHATS, Elspeth Centre for Women, Ontario Coalition of Seniors, BASSICS and Vaughan Fire and Rescue, and through this support acquires information and tools that are shared with our members.

The events and activities planned for 2016 are listed in this deputation for your review.

This is what SAVI proposes for 2016

- ongoing food drives and fundraising efforts for Vaughan Food Bank, Mackenzie Hospital Foundation and other worthy causes
- continue the computer education classes at Elspeth Centre for Women, at Blue Willow seniors residence
- explore and form more partnerships with other agencies that provide workshops for seniors on health issues, technology programs, etc., for the benefit of our seniors
- continue to offer:
 - a) Fundraising BingoRama events (approximately 3-4 annually)
 - b) Volunteer Appreciation Event
 - c) Seniors' Information and Exhibition Fair
 - d) Seniorsfest/Cultural Festival Celebration
 - e) Holiday Concert

In particular I would like to draw your attention to the Cultural Festival, scheduled for September 11th. This year, SAVI will be replacing its annual Seniorsfest with a Cultural Festival Celebration, embracing and showcasing our diversities, cultures and traditions. In this respect, we plan to discuss with staff, the possibility of incorporating this celebration with the City's 25th Anniversary. STAY TUNED!

SAVI encourages the City to:

1. continue the interactive consultations between staff and SAVI on issues related to seniors;
2. support the recommendation as drafted in the Older Adult Recreation Strategy;
3. pursue the age-friendly community concept as identified in the Older Adult Recreation Strategy; and
4. operate those programs and activities that the Clubs may not be able to provide on a regular basis, due to lack of financial support.

Special and heartfelt "thanks" are extended to Council for the following:

1. the realization of the much-awaited hospital for the City of Vaughan. This is something that SAVI has long advocated for and continues to support through various fundraising efforts; and
2. on behalf of the Maple Pioneer Italian Seniors Club: since the request several years ago, for a larger parking lot at 8 Merino Road, the Club was recently advised that the request was approved and funds set aside in the 2016 budget.

Inasmuch as we recognize and appreciate your continued support, I also come here today to voice the following concern:

On behalf of the Pine York Seniors Club: since the Club's last move in September 2010, its membership has grown, along with its events and programs, resulting in overcrowding. The executive welcome an opportunity to discuss the availability of a larger facility that can better accommodate our members.

Overall, the members of SAVI are very appreciative of the facilities that have been provided for our use and enjoyment, and the support that Council provides to ensure that we remain socially and physically active through our Golden Years.

As in the past, we are hopeful that our voice is heard and our concerns given due consideration. We continue to trust in your commitment and support in promoting the work of this fabulous organization.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Isabella Ferrara, President
Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative
(S.A.V.I.)