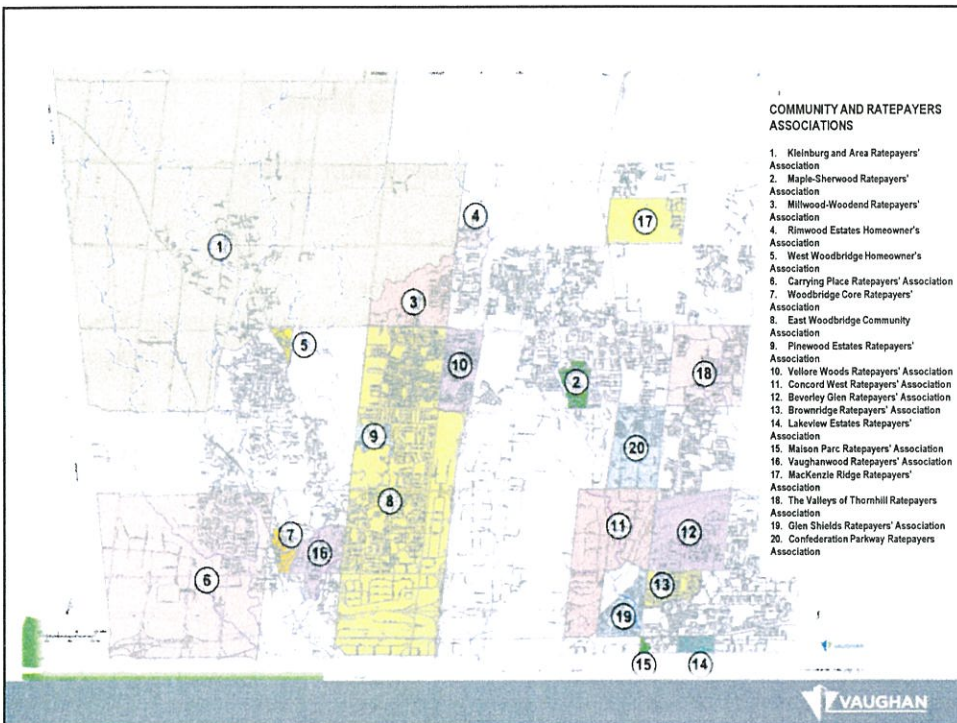
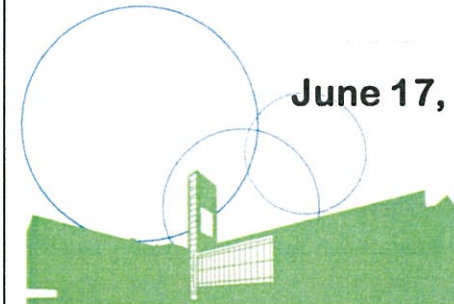


C4- CW(ws)  
June 17/13  
Item 3

6/17/2013

# Registered Ratepayer/Community Association Policy Review Presentation to Committee of the Whole Working Session

June 17, 2013



## Review Timelines

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| December 2012    | <b>Council Direction</b><br><i>That the City Clerk in consultation with interested parties, review and report on the City of Vaughan Registered Ratepayer Policy</i> |
| April 8-22, 2013 | <b>Public Survey</b>   |
| May 8, 2013      | <b>Public Forum</b>  |
| June 17, 2013    | <b>Committee of the Whole (Working Session)</b>  |
| June 25, 2013    | <b>Council</b>   |



## Current Policy – Where Are We Now?

### Registered Ratepayer/Community Association Policy

- **Main features** of current policy:
  - Annual registration process
  - Geographic exclusivity (no overlapping boundaries)
  - Executive Officers elected at General Meeting no less than every three (3) years
    - Notice of Meeting to elect officers provided in accordance with constitution
    - Minutes of meeting to elect officers filed with City Clerk
- **Stated Benefits:**
  - Free meeting space once per year to hold Annual General Meeting
  - Hard copy agendas and minutes
  - Consultation and Notice of issues



## Public Consultation Process

- Public survey and notice of public forum distributed to all registered ratepayer associations, Members of Council
- Advertised in *Vaughan Citizen* and *Thornhill Liberal*, and City's web site.
- Public Survey - April 8 to April 22, 2013
- Public Forum - May 8, 2013
- Committee of the Whole Working Session – June 17, 2013



5



## Public Consultation and Policy Review

### Key Objective - Facilitating Civic Engagement

- Strong civic engagement leads to an informed public and healthy, vibrant community – “A City of Choice” in keeping with *Vaughan Vision 2020*
- Three (3) questions:
  1. What role do ratepayer/community associations plan in the process of civic engagement?
  2. Does a formal ratepayer/community association registration process help or hinder the goal of civic engagement?
  3. Is it appropriate for the City to regulate the affairs of ratepayer and community associations who participate in the political and decision-making process?



6



## Public Consultation and Policy Review

Staff identified specific aspects of the policy that merited further review during the public consultation:

### Geographic Exclusivity

- Is geographic exclusivity an essential component of recognizing ratepayer/community associations?

### City Role - Demands for City Oversight

- What degree of involvement by the City is appropriate?

### Benefits of Registration Process

- Is registration with the City important for ratepayer/community associations? What are (or should be) the benefits of registration with the City?



## Public Consultation and Policy Review

### Public Survey

- Anonymous survey completed by 38 respondents:
  - Member of Registered Ratepayer Association 35
  - Member of Ratepayer Association (Non-Registered) 2
  - Not member of Ratepayer Association 1

### Public Forum

- Approximately 25 participants
- Primarily representatives of registered ratepayer associations





## Public Feedback

Four main themes emerged in relation to the ratepayer/community association policy:

1. Perceived Legitimacy and Credibility
2. Freedom of Association/Fostering Civic Engagement
3. Access to City Resources/Benefits
4. City's Oversight role



9



## Perceived Legitimacy and Credibility

Public feedback indicates that there is perceived value in having formal recognition of ratepayer associations by the City.

Considerations:

- Procedure By-law does not distinguish between registered and non-registered associations – weight given to input is assessed in circumstances, not on whether group registered.
- Registration with the City does not qualify ratepayer groups for appellant status in front of OMB.



10



## Freedom of Association/Fostering Civic Engagement

One of the more contentious elements of the current policy is the requirement that geographic areas of ratepayer associations cannot overlap.

### Considerations:

- Policy which restricts ability of groups to register (eg. 'first in' principle) may be at odds with goal of fostering open civic engagement.
- Associations may form, not based on geographic boundaries, but based on specific issues. These associations may be time limited and issue specific, but are formed for the purpose of civic engagement.



## Access to City Resources

There was strong support from participants for a continuation of one free meeting space per year, and, in fact, expansion of this benefit.

### Considerations:

- The suggestion of expanding the number of free meeting spaces cannot be looked at in isolation of the broader City policy governing Community Services Organizations (CSO)
- Registered ratepayer groups already receive significantly reduced rate for room rentals under CSO policy.



## City's Oversight Role

Many participants suggested that the City should take a more active role in regard to ratepayer associations.

### Considerations:

- Is it appropriate for City staff to be actively monitoring and regulating the internal affairs of ratepayer and community associations when these associations are operating as participants in the broader political process?
- More active staff oversight will have resource implications.



13



## Options

Three (3) Policy options can be viewed as points on a continuum:

- Option 1 – Robust Policy
- Option 2 – Status Quo
- Option 3 – Streamlined Public Register

Report includes comparative analysis of the following factors:

- *Perceived Legitimacy/Credibility*
- *Freedom of Association/Fostering Civic Engagement*
- *Access to City Resources*
- *City's Oversight Role*



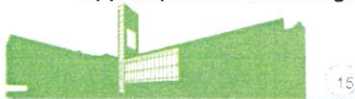
14



## Option 1 – Robust Policy

A more robust version of the current policy:

- Geographic exclusivity maintained; but formal application and appeal process for groups wanting to form new associations in existing area;
- Associations may register to represent geographic areas, or issue or issues which are not geographically organized;
- Minimum membership defined by number of households (25) rather than number of members;
- Increased registration requirements (mandatory AGM, copies of minutes, notices, statutory declarations)
- Increased investigative authority for City Clerk
- Appeal process for de-registration



## Option 2 – Current Policy

The current policy:

- Annual registration process
- Geographic exclusivity
- Minimum membership – 25 members in urban area, 10 members in rural area
- Executive Officers elected at General Meeting no less than every three (3) years
- Notice of Meeting to elect officers provided in accordance with constitution
- Minutes of meeting to elect officers filed with City Clerk





## Option 3 – Streamlined Public Register of Ratepayer and Community Associations

A streamlined version of the current policy:

- Requirement for geographic exclusivity eliminated;
- Associations may register to represent geographic area, or to represent an issue or issues;
- Minimum membership defined by households (10) rather than by number of members;
- Streamlined registration (no longer require constitution, AGM minutes);
- Annual filing posted on-line for public transparency;
- Mandatory email contact for organization posted online



17



## Recommended Option

Option 3: Streamlined Public Register of Ratepayer and Community Associations

- Strong framework for civic engagement through broader registration criteria and removal of geographic exclusivity;
- Transparency and recognition for associations, by maintaining a formal register which is publicly posted;
- Appropriate and sustainable level of staff oversight, providing for administrative oversight and updating of register, rather than enforcement and arbitration of disputes.

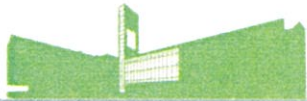


18



## Policy Overview – Option 3

1. Upon initial formation, group to submit:
  - a) Registration Form
  - b) Membership List (Minimum of 10 households)
  - c) Statement of Purpose
  - d) Boundaries, if any
  - e) Contact name, number, e-mail
  - f) URL
  - g) Name of person representing/binding the Association
2. After initial registration, association to update information at least annually.
3. Association to immediate notify City Clerk of changes
4. Once per year, for AGM, may use one City/Library facility at no cost, and may receive CSO rate for other rentals (subject to administrative restrictions imposed)
5. Notification of City issues – groups on register will receive notification of planning and other issues as applicable.



19