

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **WARD(S):** 2

TITLE: WOODBRIDGE VILLAGE FARMERS' MARKET (IN-KIND CITY SUPPORT)

FROM:
Nick Spensieri, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

This report seeks Council approval to continue to grant the Woodbridge Agricultural Society permission to operate the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market on the City's property at no cost for the venue for the 2023 season. The Market runs from June to early October on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Report Highlights

- The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is an important element of the community, having operated for 14 years. In 2022, the market drew approximately 700 people per week while hosting 22 vendors in 2022.
- The Woodbridge Agricultural Society is requesting that they be allowed to continue operating the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market in the parking lot of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena at no cost for the 2023 season.
- Supporting the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market represents roughly \$3,300 per year of in-kind support.

Recommendations

1. THAT permission be granted to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society (WAS) to operate the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market (WVFM) on the City's property (Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena parking lot) for the 2023 season at no cost on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and that a storage unit be supplied to the Market, on-site at no additional cost;

2. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development utilizes corporate communications resources and channels to promote the Market; and,
3. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market provide no-cost booth space to the City on an as-requested basis.

Background

On December 13, 2022, the City received a formal letter of request from the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market, requesting that the City approve the continued use of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena's parking lot, water, electricity, washrooms and a storage container for its upcoming market seasons (see Attachment 1).

The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is a seasonal event owned and managed by the Woodbridge Agricultural Society. The WAS is a not-for-profit organization in the City of Vaughan.

The farmers' market's guiding principle is to showcase farmers who grow or raise at least 51 percent of the produce sold at their stall.

The mission of the Market is to support and promote local agriculture; locally produced goods and services; and healthy living. Fees collected by the Market are for the sole purpose of advertising, promotion and operation of the Market.

The market has utilized the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena's parking lot as a base of operations for the past 12 years.

Provided by the City as an in-kind contribution, the Market's location provides good visibility, access and ambiance conducive for a farmers' market.

The market serves an average of 22 farmers and vendors per week, and welcomes 600-900 residents.

Since the last report, Item 1, Report No. 6 of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee: Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market approved by Council on May 1, 2019, the WAS has reported that average weekly attendance has remained strong, ranging from 600-900 visitors per week. In 2022, the Market operated with 22 vendors and averaged 663 visitors per week. An attendance report is provided in Attachment 2. The market is open to the public each Saturday between June and October of each year.

The City of Vaughan supports, promotes and hosts a variety of events across the City, continually enhancing existing events, while expanding over-all offerings to meet community needs and the greater public interest. Support for such events may include event consultation and services in-kind, as established through the appropriate City Policies that dictate costs, service rates and related fees for various organizations, community groups and members of the public.

A City-wide events strategy is currently underway and is expected to be finalized by year-end 2023.

This strategy will identify opportunities to grow and improve the range and depth of event offerings in Vaughan, leading to a more connected, inclusive, progressive, responsible and sustainable city.

The Office of Communications and Economic Development has historically utilized corporate communications resources and channels to promote the Market.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Item 1, Report No. 6 of the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee: Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market, Council Extract, May 1, 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

Assets like the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market play an important role in supporting and growing the Agriculture and Agri-Food sector.

Markets contribute to the City of Vaughan's strategic priorities to attract investment and create jobs, and to the Region's agricultural priorities to meet demand for local food production and increase capacity for value-added agrifood processing and support services.

The Market supports the City's and the Region's goals by providing a venue or distribution channel for locally grown or raised foods. As such, it also provides opportunities for consumer education as well as promotes community building and placemaking.

The recommendations in this report allow this important community event to continue. Furthermore, it demonstrates the City's support for this important sector.

With Council support, Staff will work, where feasible, to promote the Farmers' Market. This will help to support communities, agri-food businesses and entrepreneurs across Vaughan.

Financial Impact

Staff reviewed the City's rates for public permits and special events. The City has a Parking Lot permit fee (up to 10 hours) of \$37.59 per hour (plus HST) for Community Service Organizations. The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market organization is proposing to use the parking lot at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a period of 17 weeks. This represents roughly \$2,500 of in-kind support.

In addition, the City provides a storage container to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society during the 5-month period of operation for the Market. The value of this rental in 2022 is \$169.50 per month. This represents roughly \$850 of in-kind support.

If Council adopts Recommendation 1 of this report, it would equate to roughly \$3,300 of in-kind support to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society per year.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is one of only two markets West of Hwy 400 in the Region. The Woodbridge Market's attendance numbers demonstrate its value to the community in Vaughan and York Region.

Support for the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market would also demonstrate support for [York Region's Agri-food sector](#).

Conclusion

Farmers' markets form a vital part of the local food systems, allowing producers to connect directly with consumers. They provide economic and social benefit to communities, contributing to placemaking. Beyond being the backbone of the local food movement, markets are gathering places for neighbours, supporting social interaction and community engagement; places for community activations and economic generators common to communities with a vibrant social and cultural fabric.

As such and in consultation with Community Services staff, the recommendation within this report demonstrates a reasonable and balanced level of support for the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market.

For more information, please contact: Don De Los Santos, Manager, Economic Services, ext. 8874, don.delossantos@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. Report for 2023 WVFM - Letter of Request, December 13, 2022
2. Attendance at the WVFM Market 2022, October 13, 2022

Prepared by

Don De Los Santos, Manager, Economic Services, ext. 8874

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager