

MEMBERS' RESOLUTION

Committee of the Whole (2)

DATE: Wednesday, October 11, 2023

TITLE: SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL

FROM:

Mayor Steven Del Duca
Councillor Gila Martow

Whereas, the City of Vaughan stands with the people of Israel and offers its sincerest condolences to the families of the innocent lives lost due to the ongoing, egregious acts of violence from Hamas; and

Whereas, Mayor Del Duca and Ward 5 Councillor Martow responded by requesting that City Hall be illuminated blue and white, and for flags to be lowered to half-mast as part of an immediate effort to demonstrate solidarity with Vaughan's Jewish and Israeli families; and

Whereas, Vaughan is home to an active, engaged, thoughtful and dedicated Jewish and Israeli community committed to fostering inclusive, tolerant and welcoming neighbourhoods for all people. Vaughan's total Jewish and Israeli population constitutes 23 per cent of the entire Jewish and Israeli people in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area; and

Whereas, the City of Vaughan officially recognizes Jewish Heritage Month and holds an annual flag-raising ceremony for Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day. Celebrations like the City's annual menorah lighting ceremonies to mark Chanukah have become much-anticipated traditions enjoyed by people of all backgrounds and faiths; and

Whereas, as part of maintaining and fostering stronger relations between Vaughan and the State of Israel, during a 2019 City of Vaughan led business mission to Israel, Vaughan renewed an economic and cultural partnership with the City of Ramla, Israel, first signed in 1993. As part of the mission, the delegation visited Yad Vashem — Israel’s official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust; and

Whereas, Vaughan City Council has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism, and formally marks International Holocaust Remembrance Day annually; and

Whereas, despite a global effort to raise awareness about the atrocities of the Holocaust and to inform and engage future generations to fightback against anti-Semitism, there remains disturbing acts of anti-Semitism unfolding in communities around the world. This deplorable behaviour puts the safety and wellbeing of Jewish families at grave risk; and

Whereas, Jewish families have written to the City of Vaughan greatly concerned about the safety of their children here at home, given the unthinkable acts of targeted terrorism taking place in Israel and elsewhere.

It is therefore recommended:

1. That Vaughan City Council ratifies this Members’ Resolution as a sign of complete solidarity with the people of Israel and our local Jewish community, in response to the ongoing, egregious acts of terrorism and violence from Hamas;
2. That a copy of this Members’ Resolution be sent to York Regional Police (YRP), and that YRP be further requested to take the necessary actions to safeguard the local Jewish community, specifically at places of worship, schools and community centres, among others;
3. That City staff report back at a future date on what else can be done to enhance protective zones around places of worship and faith-based schools;
4. That the Corporate and Strategic Communications department help promote awareness of the Israel Emergency Fund - supported by the Jewish Federation of Canada-UJA and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs - an effort to raise funds to help Israelis now living in a state of war;
5. That there be a recorded vote taken in response to this Members’ Resolution;
6. That this Members’ Resolution be ratified effective immediately at this Committee of the Whole (2) meeting on October 11, 2023; and
7. That a copy of this Members’ Resolution be sent to the Israeli Consul General in Toronto.

Financial and Staff Resource Impact

This members' resolution has no financial impacts.

Attachments N/A