

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, September 24, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP WITH COSENZA, ITALY

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

In July 2019, the Vaughan and Cosenza International Partnership Committee (VCIPC) submitted a proposal to the City of Vaughan requesting a Cultural Partnership with the City of Cosenza, a municipality in Italy. The VCIPC proposal fulfills the requirements of *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships*.

Report Highlights

- Seeds of a cultural relationship between Vaughan and Cosenza were planted in 2017, when a delegation of elected officials visited Vaughan.
- In July 2019, the Vaughan and Cosenza International Partnership Committee (VCIPC), based in Vaughan, submitted a Cultural Partnership proposal to the City of Vaughan.
- The City of Cosenza is capital of the Province of Cosenza, in the Region of Calabria, Italy.
- Vaughan is home to an active Italian-Calabrese diaspora, including business and community leaders residing from Cosenza.
- A Cultural Partnership between the two cities, sponsored by the VCIPC, can promote cultural and economic exchange between each community.

Recommendations

1. That, in accordance with *Corporate Policy 02.C.01*, a Cultural Partnership between the City of Vaughan, and the Vaughan and Cosenza International Partnership Committee, and the City of Cosenza, Italy be approved; and
2. That, the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to sign a Cultural Partnership Agreement between the City of Vaughan, and the Vaughan and Cosenza International Partnership Committee, and the City of Cosenza, Italy, subject to the form of this Agreement being satisfactory to the City Solicitor (or designate) and its content satisfactory to the Interim City Manager (or designate).

Background

In 2019, the City of Vaughan modernized its approach to international partnerships with the adoption of *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships*. The Policy provides guiding principles on entering into new Cultural and Economic Partnerships with international communities and organizations.

The Policy defines Cultural Partnerships as those that promote the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the City; engage the local diaspora; build and strengthen bridges of mutual understanding and respect; foster appreciation of unique social and cultural heritages; facilitate interaction and collaboration; generate tourism; create the potential for local cultural organizations to act as cultural ambassadors; and increase the City's profile nationally, and on the world stage.

In July 2019, the Vaughan and Cosenza International Partnership Committee (VCIPC), based in Vaughan, submitted a Cultural Partnership proposal to staff (see Attachment 1). The Proposal submitted by the VCIPC meets the Policy requirements and criteria outlined below:

1. Be sponsored by a community association/group or an individual member or representative of both the Organization and City.
2. Include a list of individuals and/or community groups both in the City and in the Organization's community who have a desire to actively support a long-term commitment as evidence for a strong relationship that would endure changes in elected government officials.
3. Demonstrate support and commitment from the Organization in terms of community interest and active participation.
4. Include a community profile and indicate areas of compatibility with the City.

5. Present a 4-year workplan with clear goals and performance measures that demonstrate a commitment to support visits, receptions, delegations, and other similar functions with minimal financial contribution from the City.

Previous Reports/Authority

[CW Item 3, Report 19: Cultural and Economic Partnerships, May 14, 2019](#)

Analysis and Options

Vaughan is home to a large Italian diaspora. Over 30% of Vaughan residents self-identify as ethnic Italians (94,725), making this group the largest diaspora in Vaughan, and representing 19.6% of all ethnic Italians in the Greater Toronto Area (Toronto Census Metropolitan Area), 10.2% in Ontario, and 6% in Canada (source: 2016 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada). Vaughan's dynamic Italian community has made significant contributions to the economic and cultural vitality of the City.

The Proposal provided by the VCIPC identifies the contributions of the Cosenza and Calabria diaspora in Vaughan specifically. Its committee members include established leaders in the food, building and construction, and professional services industries, in addition to long-serving community volunteers. The Members have demonstrated their commitment to enrich the existing links between Vaughan and Cosenza through the establishment of a formal Cultural Partnership, beyond changes to elected officials.

The City of Cosenza is the capital of the Province of Cosenza, located in the Region of Calabria. The city centre has a population of 70,000, while approximately 250,000 people live in the metropolitan area. Home to museums, libraries, and theatres, the City is considered a cultural hub in Calabria.

Seeds of a relationship between Vaughan and Cosenza were planted in 2017

The City of Vaughan received a Delegation from Cosenza in November 2017, comprised of Cosenza elected officials, and business leaders. The delegation was in Vaughan to attend the 11th Premio Telesio La Piazza Awards held in Vaughan.

Supporting the Vaughan Italian diaspora is a key Cultural Partnership benefit

The proposed Cultural Partnership aligns with Economic and Cultural Development's Business Plan. As one of its pillars, the Plan recognizes that increasing knowledge about international markets and customs and traditions is possible by engaging the local diaspora through Economic and Cultural Partnerships. This Cultural Partnership, therefore, creates an additional avenue to promote and market Vaughan's advantages, and at the same time, foster appreciation of unique social and cultural heritages.

Cultural Partnerships have the additional benefit of empowering local diaspora to act as cultural ambassadors, and as such, promote Vaughan abroad. A Cultural Partnership bolsters the diaspora's capacity to foster deeper ties with the City of Cosenza and create the potential for further economic and cultural outputs, including trade, business expansions, cultural exchange, and cross-promotion opportunities.

Financial Impact

Cultural and Economic Partnerships are funded by a dedicated budget of the Economic and Cultural Development Department approved during the annual budget cycle. There is no additional funding requirement for developing and maintaining the Workplan associated with the proposed Cultural Partnership Agreement. If required, Council approval will be sought for additional funding requests to support the execution of the Workplan.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Municipalities in York Region are responsible for developing and executing their own International Business Development Programs. Cultural and Economic Partnerships are within the mandate of Economic and Cultural Development's Business Plan as a vehicle for promoting Vaughan's advantages, strategic projects, market opportunities, and local businesses in global centers. With respect to foreign direct investment, York Region's agreement with Toronto Global—the agency responsible for promoting investment in the Toronto Region—does not currently identify Italy as a priority country. Working in markets that are not represented by Toronto Global expands Vaughan's market reach and awareness and complements the work Toronto Global does on our behalf to promote York Region and Vaughan abroad.

Conclusion

The VCIPC is the requestor and catalyst for the proposed Cultural Partnership, and responsible for bridging the City of Vaughan and the City of Cosenza through a set of actions (see Workplan in Attachment 2). The role of the City of Vaughan is to facilitate this Partnership and support its success.

This report recommends that the City of Vaughan enter into a Cultural Partnership Agreement with the VCIPC and the City of Cosenza for a four-year term, with an opportunity to reevaluate the Partnership at the conclusion of the first year, pursuant to *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships*.

For more information, please contact: Dennis Cutajar, Dennis.Cutajar@vaughan.ca

Attachments

1. VCIPC Proposal Submission, July 2, 2019
2. Vaughan-Cosenza Cultural Agreement, Economic and Cultural Development Department, September 24, 2019

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