

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 10, 2021**

Item 15, Report No. 11, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on March 10, 2021.

#### **15. PROCLAMATION REQUESTS FOR EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH AND PURPLE DAY, AND AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH AND AUTISM AWARENESS DAY**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends:**

- 1) That the recommendations contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager, Administrative Services and City Solicitor dated March 8, 2021, be approved; and**
- 2) That the illumination of City Hall be approved as follows:**
  - (a) March 26, 2021 in Purple for Epilepsy Awareness Day; and**
  - (b) April 2, 2021 in Blue for Autism Awareness Day.**

#### **Recommendations**

1. That March 2021 be proclaimed as Epilepsy Awareness Month;
2. That March 26, 2021 be proclaimed as Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness, and that Council provide direction on the illumination of City Hall in Purple;
3. That April be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Month on an annual basis;
4. That April 2, be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Day on an annual basis, and that Council provide direction on the illumination of City Hall in Blue; and
5. That the proclamations be posted on the City's website and that the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be directed to promote the above-noted proclamations through the various corporate channels.

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Monday, March 8, 2021

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** PROCLAMATION REQUESTS FOR EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH AND PURPLE DAY, AND AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH AND AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**FROM:**

Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Administrative Services and City Solicitor

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

To seek Council approval for proclamation requests for: Epilepsy Awareness Month and Purple Day, and Autism Awareness Month and Autism Awareness Day; and to seek direction on the request for City Hall Illumination for Purple Day and Autism Awareness Day.

**Report Highlights**

- Respond to requests from Epilepsy York Region and Waves of Change for Autism.
- Requests for proclamations in March and April.
- Requests for illumination of City Hall.

**Recommendations**

1. That March 2021 be proclaimed as Epilepsy Awareness Month;
2. That March 26, 2021 be proclaimed as Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness, and that Council provide direction on the illumination of City Hall in Purple;
3. That April be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Month on an annual basis;
4. That April 2, be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Day on an annual basis, and that Council provide direction on the illumination of City Hall in Blue; and
5. That the proclamations be posted on the City's website and that the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be directed to promote the above-noted proclamations through the various corporate channels.

## **Background**

### **Epilepsy Awareness Month and Purple Day**

Correspondence was received from Epilepsy York Region on February 23, 2021 requesting a proclamation and illumination of City Hall. To combat the stigma surrounding those that have epilepsy may live with, the month of March, and specifically Purple Day (which is on March 26), has been celebrated internationally to raise awareness, dispel myths associated with epilepsy, and increase education.

The proclamation request has been previously approved by Council.

### **Autism Awareness Month and Autism Awareness Day**

Correspondence was received from Waves of Change for Autism, in collaboration with Autism Ontario (York Region) on February 24, 2021 requesting a proclamation and illumination of City Hall. Autism Ontario is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professional with whom they interact. The association and its chapters share common goals of providing information and education, supporting research and advocating for programs and services for the autism community. Waves of Change for Autism has requested that proclamation be made on an annual basis going forward.

A request for an annual flag raising has also been made, however, the Flag Protocol Policy (03.C011) states:

“4.1.1. A new request must be initiated by the Requestor each year and shall not automatically be held or reserved for the same date in a subsequent year.”

The proclamation request has been previously approved by Council.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

Epilepsy Awareness Month and Purple Day – [March 11, 2020](#)

Autism Awareness Month and Day – [March 11, 2020](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

### **Epilepsy Awareness Month and Purple Day**

The proclamation request meets the requirements of the City's Proclamation Policy as follows:

“An official and ceremonial statement made by or under the authority of Council, recognizing a cause, event or commemoration of significance to the City of Vaughan and its citizens.

2.1. For the purposes of section 2, a proclamation may be issued for:

2.1.3. Charitable and non-profit fundraising campaigns;

2.1.4. Public awareness campaigns;”

### **Autism Awareness Month and Autism Awareness Day**

The proclamation request meets the requirements of the City’s Proclamation Policy as follows:

“An official and ceremonial statement made by or under the authority of Council, recognizing a cause, event or commemoration of significance to the City of Vaughan and its citizens.

2.1. For the purposes of section 2, a proclamation may be issued for:

2.1.3. Charitable and non-profit fundraising campaigns;

2.1.4. Public awareness campaigns;”

### **Illumination Requests**

An Illumination Policy is currently in development and expected to be before Council for approval in Q2 2021. As the City does not currently have a policy in place for illumination requests, staff will require direction from Council.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no expected financial impact with respect to these requests.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Not applicable.

### **Conclusion**

Having reviewed the requests, staff is recommending that March 2021 be proclaimed Epilepsy Awareness Month and March 26, 2021 be proclaimed as Purple Day; that April be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Month and April 2 be proclaimed as Autism Awareness Day on an annual basis; that Council provide direction on the illumination requests; and finally that the proclamations be posted on the City’s website and that the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be directed to promote the proclamations through the various corporate channels.

**For more information**, please contact: Todd Coles, City Clerk, ext. 8281.

**Attachments**

1. Correspondence from the Executive Director, Epilepsy York Region, received February 23, 2021.
2. Correspondence from the President, Waves of Change for Autism, received February 24, 2021.

**Prepared by**

Shari Gouzvaris, Supervisor, City Clerk's Administrative Services, ext. 8280

**Approved by**



Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager  
Administrative Services & City Solicitor

**Reviewed by**



Jim Harnum, City Manager

City of Vaughan  
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Vaughan, ON  
L6A 1T1

Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

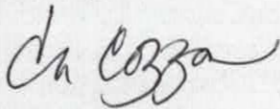
Dear Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua,

Epilepsy York Region (EYR) is a non-profit organization which supports individuals and their families living with epilepsy. For the last 33 years we have been advocating, supporting, educating, promoting public awareness and developing programs for those with epilepsy based on their needs. Currently, in York Region alone, there is estimated to be 11, 000 individuals with epilepsy. This breaks down to 1 in every 100 people in our catchment area and makes it likely for someone to personally know at least one individual with epilepsy.

Although our resources and tools have worked to support so many across York Region living with epilepsy, the stigma that so many live with often outweighs the seizure itself. This stigma has certainly grown this past year given the increased levels of isolation and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many, especially children, are left feeling embarrassed, alone and isolated from their friends, peers and families. To combat this stigma, the month of March, and specifically Purple Day, which is celebrated on March 26th annually, has been marked internationally to raise awareness, dispel the myths associated to this disease, and to increase education. Purple Day invites those across the world to wear purple on March 26th in support of those with epilepsy and help those individuals understand they are not alone in their unknown ending battle with epilepsy. It is an opportunity for those living with epilepsy to reach out and let the community know that seizures do not define who they are; they can still be a loving parent and spouse, a fun child, a productive employee, a learning student, a thriving talented individual and most of all, a friend.

We at Epilepsy York Region are reaching out to you, in hopes that the City of Vaughan will proclaim March as epilepsy awareness month and March 26th as Purple Day. In addition, if there is a possibility of lighting a local landmark purple on March 26th showing your support, we would love to be part of this initiative!

Yours truly,



Claudia Cozza  
Executive Director  
Epilepsy York Region

**From:** [Ellen Contardi](#)  
**To:** [Coles, Todd](#)  
**Cc:** [Leung, Isabel](#); [Gouzvaris, Shari](#); [David Di Benedetto](#); [Michelle De Buono](#); [Laura Webb](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Proclamation Request Autism Awareness Month  
**Date:** February-24-21 12:56:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Dear Mr. City Clerk,

In 2016, Waves of Changes for Autism was created to bring hope and relief to Vaughan families dealing with the daily struggles of raising a child with autism. It is through these challenges that undoubtedly exist both emotionally, physically and financially that fuel this dedicated team to put their efforts towards this charity, Waves of Changes for Autism - a registered not-for-profit charity. This charity is completely volunteer-run and fiercely passionate about supporting families living in Vaughan with Autism. The charity aids children aged 13 and under. Their goal is to assist as many families as possible in the community financially with the costs incurred for specialized treatment and programs.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, our dedicated team of volunteers continue to help Vaughan families affected by the financial hardships of raising a child with autism. We remain fiercely committed to advocating on behalf of these children and families, including raising awareness within our community and among our government partners, like the City of Vaughan.

We thank Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Council for their past, and continued generosity and support to bring awareness and ensure the City moves forward without leaving anyone behind.

**Waves of Changes for Autism, in collaboration with Autism Ontario (York Chapter), respectfully request that City of Vaughan Council proclaim the month of April as Autism Awareness Month and acknowledge April 2 as Autism Awareness Day, annually, through a flag raising ceremony and illumination of Council Chambers in blue at Vaughan City Hall annually on April 2.**

I look forward to working with the City and Members of Council to generate further awareness of this important issue affecting Vaughan families.

Stay Safe,  
Ellen Contardi,  
President Waves of Changes for Autism



Waves of Changes for Autism

260 Edgeley Blvd., Unit 32  
Concord, Ontario  
L4K 3Y4

[www.wavesofchanges.ca](http://www.wavesofchanges.ca)

CCDR# 80130 8743 RR0001 WOCFA

Waves of Changes for Autism truly believes that change lies in serving families individually