



CITY OF
ST. CATHARINES

Corporate Report

Report from Recreation and Community Services, Programs and Cultural Services

Date of Report: February 6, 2013

Date of Meeting: February 25, 2013

Report Number: RCS-051-2013

File: 35.60.86

Subject: Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History – Extension of Term

Recommendation

That Council approve the extension of the term of the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History to December 31, 2014. FORTHWITH

Background

At the January 21, 2011 Council meeting, City Council approved the establishment of the committee and the Terms of Reference to guide their work investigating the feasibility of establishing a National Black History Museum in the City of St. Catharines.

Membership for the Committee was advertised and recruitment completed with representatives of stakeholder groups, Recreation and Community Services (RCS) staff, Council and community members at large. The Committee was established for a term of two (2) years, after which time the committee was to be reassessed to ascertain the need to continue the work.

At the November 26, 2012 Council meeting, City Council approved the following recommendations:

That City Council approve the overall concept for the development of a Black History Interpretive Centre within the City of St. Catharines; and

That Council endorse the committee's recommended vision statement for the proposed facility; and

That Council support the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History (MAC-BH) in continuing its role of investigating the feasibility of this undertaking; and

That a request for funds to support a formal Feasibility Study be referred to the 2013 budget process.

Report

The inaugural meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History was held on August 11, 2011. The committee has met monthly since that time and the bulk of the committee's work has centered around investigating the feasibility of establishing a Black History Interpretive Centre in St. Catharines, consistent with the Terms of Reference established for this Committee.

In order to move forward the recommendations approved by Council on November 26, 2012, the term of the committee, which ends on January 31, 2013, needs to be extended. It is recommended that the committee's term be extended to the end of 2014, in line with other committees of Council.

Staff recommend that the current committee membership be maintained and renewed at the same time as all other Council committees. The Clerk's Office will present a report to Council in order to fill the single vacancy currently in the committee's membership.

Additional Recognition of Black History

In addition to the work of the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History, the City of St. Catharines Recreation and Community Services department will be recognizing a significant milestone in 2013 – the 100th anniversary of the death of Harriet Tubman. The carpet bed in Lester B. Pearson Park, adjacent to the Kiwanis Aquatics Centre at the corner of Niagara and Carlton Streets will be planted to recognize Tubman's contribution to the Underground Railroad and St. Catharines' black history. The bed will feature the iconic "running man" image of the freedom seekers and the words Harriet Tubman and Freedom Seekers. The bed is expected to be planted during the first week in June 2013.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

Conclusion

The Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History has carried out important work in the effort of investigating options for increasing the visibility of our community's black history. An extension to the term of this committee will allow the committee to continue this work.

Notification

It is advised that the members of the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History be notified.

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