

Agenda Item 13.3

From: Stan Taylor
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 8:40 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: David Dunlop Observatory

To Whom It May Concern:

The York Region Astronomy Group has more than 120 members who had been maintaining the DDO observatory and running all programs (under the RASC banner) for the last eight years. Our members were responsible for 92% of all the volunteer hours devoted to the observatory from 2009 – 2016. These programs ranged from public viewing nights to speaker nights, Girl Guide and Scout visits, school trips, special event programming, eclipse viewing and meteor shower parties.

Another group, the DDOD, includes a couple of former U of T contractors and a handful of supporters. Perhaps most relevant, they were led for many years by an individual who is now a town councilor.

The third group, the Toronto Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, walked away from lease negotiations with the town more than a year ago saying they didn't want the responsibility. That's what prompted the formation of York Region Astronomy.

The staff report is recommending that town council approve an agreement with the DDOD and RASC Toronto Centre. York Region Astronomy would be out of the picture.

The reasons they give don't reflect the scope of our proposal, our expertise or our ongoing commitment to this astronomical treasure. They don't reflect our community partnerships or the support we have from the astronomical community and from local leaders, including David Dunlap, grandson of the David Dunlap after whom the observatory was named.

We think this decision is too important to be made for any reason other than what's best for the observatory and for the community of Richmond Hill.

I would encourage all counsellors to read a copy of the York Region Astronomy proposal on our [DDO website](#).

Stanley R Taylor
RASC, YRA

From: Rick
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 9:32 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: The future of the DDO

I just received an email from the York Region Astronomy association announcing that they are not in the running to continue their good volunteer work at managing the DDO. I had joined this group last year as a new astronomy hobbist. One of the reasons for joining this group was their involvement in the DDO and their track record of events, activities and professional approach to reaching out to the community. I believe that these are essential ingredients that are required to ensure the future success for this community's involvement and interest in astronomy. Not to mention the size of the group and the impressive credentials and depth of the list of individuals leading this group. I have not seen the proposal of the other groups, but I was very impressed with the YRA's document. Can you make the proposals from the other groups public?

I personally am extremely disappointed in receiving this information and the decision being made by the town. It makes me wonder how this could happen and what the underlying rational for this decision is. I would appreciate it very much if you could explain the rational. Also the fact that the group at the top of the list was once led by one of your councillors is very concerning.

Rick Newell

From: Katharine Watts
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: David Dunlop Observatory

Importance: High

Dear City Clerk,

The David Dunlop Observatory is a treasure, and it had been neglected until the group of volunteers that recently became the YRA began to take care of it. Thousands of volunteer hours were put into DDO by these amazing people, and they ran programs which we enjoyed, and we are extremely excited with their plans for the future for the DDO. They are also the ones that have the most experience with the very expensive equipment.

I think it's important that all City Councillers voting on this topic read the proposed program that the YRA has offered and recognize how important to the community this project is. With community outreach programs, public viewing nights, speaker nights, Girl Guides, Scouts etc -- they have a comprehensive plan.

The YRA have put thousands of volunteer hours in, and are extremely knowledgeable about this project, no one else can bring it to fruition the way that they can. It is a labour of love, but backed up with their knowledge of the topic. They have the community support.

You could not get a better group of experts to run this.

Sincerely,

Katharine Watts

From: Ross Lunan
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 1:41 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Expression of Interest - David Dunlap Observatory (DDO) - Council Meeting) October 23, 2017, Report Number SRCS.17.23

Dear Sir/Madame

This is a comment from an interested York Region resident and DDO user on the subject staff report and recommendations.

I am one of the 1000's people who have attended many astronomy educational and Great Telescope tour events over 2008 to 2016 at the DDO, executed by people now part of the York Region Astronomy Association (YRAA), who submitted one of the Proposals referred to in the Report. I have appreciated the dedication, knowledge, and care shown for this valuable national Canadian heritage facility by the YRAA. Their public outreach and educational activities have benefited and contributed significantly to the people of City of Richmond Hill and York region. The YRAA comprises several people who have had trained and certified hands-on experience maintaining and operating this 82 year old priceless instrument since 2008, and include astronomy and telescope operational expertise handed down from those on the original UofT staff, a competence that is unmatched by any other group organization.

As I believe that the best interests of the DDO would be to designate the YRAA to continue their work, I was very disappointed to read that the YRAA proposal was not recommended. Accordingly, I strongly suggest that all councillors **read the YRAA proposal** so that their assessment of the Staff Report is thoroughly fact based and can realize that this is a more appropriate choice, by far, over the Staff's "DDOD organization" recommendation.

This link is to the YRAA Website where a copy of the YRAA original proposal is posted, under "Latest News" banner <https://www.theddo.ca/>.

Sincerely
Ross Lunan

From: Adam E
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 4:53 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: The DDO

Save the DDO, keep it in RASC hands. Don't ruin a good thing that doesn't need unnecessary change.

-Adam

From: Humza Raza
Sent: Saturday, October 21, 2017 11:50 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Dunlop observaroy

Hi, I don't understand why you guys have closed the observatory since march, the entire facility was being so well run by volunteers and you guys closed it. I don't understand why it is always about money with government officials. You guys let the community of Richmond hill miss out on warm summer nights where families couldve gotten together and enjoyed viewing the telescope. It is really sad what you guys did. You should just accept the proposal by the York region astronomy association and reopen the observatory asap.

Best Regards
Humza Raza

From: Kareem Sherif
Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2017 10:45 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Cc: Katerina Sherif
Subject: David Dunlap Observatory

To whom it may concern,

We are writing in regards to the DDO, of which my wife and I have visited and enjoyed several times.

It is a shame first off, that it has been out of service for such a long time. We were very happy with the way it had been run, the programs offered and the enthusiasm of those running the facility.

I certainly hope that they continue to be able to run the facility and create the schedule and programs offered.

No matter what happens, we would like the quality and frequency of programs to be maintained or improved for the public, including all of those young astronomers like our young son.

Thank you in advance and I hope our voice is heard.

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Best Regards,

Kareem Sherif

"Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

~TR

From: HACKER
Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2017 8:17 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory.

Dear Council Members,

I have been going to visit the David Dunlap Observatory for many years. I have taken my children there and they are amazed every time. I am amazed. The setting, the buildings, the nature around it all contribute to its appeal. When visiting the staff there are so helpful in explaining the site and about the sky. Please, I encourage you to maintain the Observatory as a learning center that will captivate the minds of young and old. A tourist attraction it is not, a place of understanding our nature and the cosmos it is. Maintaining this world renowned Observatory is of great importance and must be handled with great care and expertise.

Thanks,

A long time resident and visitor to the Observatory,
Jacob Hacker

From: MJ Ducharme
Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2017 11:16 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory

Town Council,

Please postpone your vote on this important matter until you can read the full proposals from all interested parties. I am confident that if you have all of the information in your hands before you make your decision, you will vote to allow York Region Astronomy continue their valuable community service at the DDO. Thank you.

Mary Jo Ducharme

From: Carlo Arteficio
Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2017 11:56 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory.

Good day.

I am a frequent visitor to the David Dunlap observatory and am concerned that a decision is being made without all proposals being considered.

As such, I would like to request that Council vote be postponed until councillors have had a chance to review all proposals and not just the staff report.

A concerned citizen,

Carlo Arteficio

From: Michelle Lindo
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 4:02 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory

Please postpone the decision/vote to allow for the consideration of ALL proposals.

Myself, and my family have enjoyed programs at DDO over the years and cannot understand why a decision would be made to shut out the passionate, dedicated, knowledgeable, kind, genuine volunteers who work hard out of sheer passion!

Please postpone the vote and consider all proposals!

Sincerely
The Lindo-Collins Family

From: Amanda Wesson
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 7:55 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Re: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory

Please postpone tonight's vote until the council can review all available data and make the and best decision for the observatory and its patrons.

> On Oct 23, 2017, at 6:58 AM, Amanda Wesson <amandawesson@gmail.com> wrote:

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> To whom it may concern,

>

> Please accept the York Astronomy Association's proposal for the David Dunlap observatory. Our family has relied on them for years to educate us in the stars and their stewardship of the observatory is based on genuine affection and knowledge.

>

> Thank you,

> Amanda Wesson

From: Tracy You <tracy.you@live.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 9:00 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Please keep DDO alive

Hello there,

We're writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our experience at David Dunlap Observatory (DDO). It was amazing opportunity for both the kids and us as adult to learn about the beautiful space out there through interacting activities.

DDO has and will do the same for many generations to come, please keep the Observatory and the largest optical telescope in Canada alive and well, serving the communities.

With our Warmest Regards,

Hailiang, Tracy, Leo & Jason

From: Adina Hodges
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 9:33 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory

Hello,

It has come to my attention that the Council is supposed to make a decision on future programming at the DDO this evening. The staff report recommends putting into place two groups that have no expertise in operating and maintaining the Observatory. I also heard that the Members of York Region Astronomy, who have been running the Observatory since 2009, are completely shut out.

I respectfully ask that the Council vote be postponed until councilors have read all the proposals and don't just rely on the staff report.

I have been a Richmond Hill resident for over 20 years and I have enjoyed several visits at the Dunlap Observatory over the last few years. People with expertise should be consulted in the future running and use of the Observatory.

Thank you.

Adina Hodges

From: Evgenia Khilov
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 9:52 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory.

Dear members of the Council,

Our family has enjoyed the visits to the observatory on more than one occasion in the past. We are so sad that it is not available to public any longer and that very knowledgeable Members of York Region Astronomy have been shut out from participating in the various outreach programs.

It has come to our attention that there will be voting on the future programming. We would like to ask the members of the council to take into consideration all available information and to read all proposals and make the informative decision based on professional opinions, not just staff reports. If you can postpone the vote until everyone reads all proposals, that would be great.

Evgenia Khilov
Marketing Coordinator

From: Pollyanna Herrera
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 9:55 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory.

Hello,

I understand that the Richmond Hill Town Centre will be making a decision in regards to the future programming at the DDO site, this evening.

I hope that you take my email and comments into consideration. I have been extremely disappointed in the manner that the Town has been treating the future of the DDO and its management.

The Members of the York Region Astronomy, have been running this program for numerous years, and were doing an excellent job. They care about the facility and care about the programs that they run. I have enjoyed many nights at the DDO and have taken family members and friends to enjoy it with me, the staff have been extremely professional and caring about the work that they do. I cannot see how anyone else can take on the work that they have been doing.

My request in this email is for the Council vote to be postponed until councilors have read all the proposals and do not just rely on the staff report. I would hope that the future of the DDO be taken more seriously and that the council consider the proposal from the York Region Astronomy.

Thank you,
Pollyanna

Pollyanna Herrera
Channel Account Manager
Lenovo Canada

From: Gaspare Di Salvo
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 10:45 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory.

Dear Town Council:

My family and I have enjoyed the David Dunlop Observatory for many years. Members of York Region Astronomy have been running the Observatory since 2009 in a professional, family oriented and enjoyable manner. They have extensive experience in operating and maintaining the observatory and a huge slate of award-winning public programs. These are essential ingredients to ensure the future success of the observatory.

I do not agree with the staff report recommending putting into place two groups that have no expertise in operating and maintaining the Observatory. Moreover, the report is not accurate, not complete nor reasonable and it should not be considered at this time. The proposal by the Members of York Region Astronomy is a practical and full representation of the future of the observatory based on years of experience, hard work and dedication. These are important factors that matter to the public.

Sincerely,

Gaspare DiSalvo

From: Beverly Tyhurst
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 10:50 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Cc: DDO-Info
Subject: Regarding SRCS.17.23 Expression of Interest – for the Delivery of Educational and Public Outreach Programming at the David Dunlap Observatory

Importance: High

Hello!

It's been brought to my attention that your council is considering putting into place two groups that have no expertise in operating and maintaining the beautiful 82 year old David Dunlap Observatory. I'm a bit shocked to hear also that you haven't consulted the ones responsible for running and operating the observatory for the past eight years. I would encourage you to consider reading a proposal available at www.theDDO.ca prior to considering how to move forward. I would agree that eight years of operating and maintaining the observatory and a huge slate of award-winning public programs counts for a lot. I have personally attended many of the events held at the David Dunlap Observatory and can attest their programming is superb. I would ask that you consider all reports and proposals – especially one from those that have been running the observatory for the past eight years prior to any decisions being made.

Respectfully,
Beverly Tyhurst

From: Jennifer Lo
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 11:27 AM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: David Dunlop Observatory

Good morning,

I have previously written to town councillors in support of the David Dunlop Observatory resuming it's educational programs and retaining the involvement and support of the York Region Astronomers whom I understand have run the programs and upkeep of the observatory for the past 8 years.

I am not an astronomer nor a member of any organization that expressed an interest in helping run the observatory, merely a member of the public who has greatly enjoyed the excellent programming offered over the years. While I have not read the proposals of other groups as they have not been made publicly available, I have read the York Region one and it is excellent and exactly what I, a Richmond Hill taxpayer, would like to see going forward. I find it highly inappropriate that the York Region Astronomers' dedication and demonstrated expertise are so lightly brushed aside especially considering the previous involvement of current town councillor Karen Cilevitz in one of the groups suggested for approval by the staff report. In the interest of fairness and in recognition of their hard work I believe it would be fitting for the town council to seek an arrangement going forward that retains the involvement of the York Region Astronomers in a major capacity and urge you to vote accordingly.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jennifer Lo

From: Raymond Kwong
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2017 12:07 PM
To: Clerks Richmondhill
Subject: David Dunlap Observatory Programs

To Whom It May Concern

I am a RASC member and read about the future proposal of the David Dunlap Observatory.

As far as I am aware, the RASC Toronto Centre's meetings are held at the Ontario Science Centre. It has observing events in North York south of Finch Avenue, in Pickering and at Long Sault east of Newcastle.

On the other hand, David Dunlap Observatory is based in the York Region, and it is in the best interest of the city to work with associations that are truly rooted in the community.

In this case I strongly urge the City Council to include the York Region Astronomy in its final decision concerning future programming and outreach events.

Regards,
Raymond Kwong