



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 13, 2022

Report Number: SRCS.22.07

Department: Community Services

Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.22.07 Indigenous Action Committee**

Purpose:

To report back to Council regarding progress toward determining rent-free facility use arrangements with the Indigenous Action Committee for a 1 year pilot period.

Recommendation:

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.22.07 regarding the Indigenous Action Committee be received, and
- b) That staff continue to work with Indigenous Action Committee to provide sites for their events free of facility rental fees and report back at the end of the 1 year pilot period.

Contact Person:

Donald Hearn, Director of Recreation and Culture

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Tracey Steele, Acting Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, Interim City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

On February 23, March 2 and March 9, 2022, in response to SRPI.22.021 (Parks Plan, Recreation Plan, and Culture Plan Review – Key Findings and Directions Report), representatives of the Indigenous Action Committee (IAC) and the Richmond Hill Circle of Friendship (COF) made several delegations to Council.

On March 9, 2022, in response to the delegations, Council directed:

That staff be authorized to take all steps necessary to facilitate the rent free user agreement between the City and Indigenous Action Committee (IAC) for a 1 year pilot project at an appropriate City facility, and that staff report back with progress at the next Council meeting on March 23, 2022.

Indigenous Action Committee and Circle of Friendship

On March 18, 2022 Staff met virtually with members of the IAC and COF. At the meeting IAC and COF representatives delivered a presentation to Staff, which outlined the mission statements of the 2 groups, short and long-term goals of each organization, and plans for 2022 events, gatherings and traditional teachings.

The Mission Statement of the IAC is to:

- a. Advocate for the Indigenous community in Richmond Hill and surrounding areas of York Region,
- b. Bring our Indigenous community together by creating events and services for Indigenous people, and
- c. Provide safe and welcoming places for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come and learn, share, and heal together.

The Mission Statement of the COF is to provide a safe space to learn about and celebrate the many cultures, walks of life, faiths, and histories of our community. The COF's work promotes diversity and inclusion and strives to address the inequities and barriers that exist in accessing community support for racialized and marginalized communities.

The IAC has 4 founding members who attended the meeting with Staff, while the COF has 2 founding members, 1 of whom is common between the 2 groups. The goals and activities of the IAC focus on Indigenous advocacy, while the COF goals and activities are broader in scope revolving around diversity, equity and inclusion in general.

Consistent with the March 9 Council direction, the remainder of this report will focus on the IAC and progress toward provision of City facilities for planned 2022 IAC events and activities.

Indigenous Action Committee Goals

The stated short-term goals of the IAC are to:

1. Be a voice for the underserved Indigenous people in Richmond Hill and York Region,

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2. Create greater access to Indigenous culture and healing by bringing the Indigenous community together through teachings, gatherings and events, and
3. Increase awareness about the lack of services, support programs, and inclusivity of Indigenous culture in our region and create actionable goals that will lead to proper reconciliation that will foster a bright future of all indigenous peoples.

The stated long-term goals of the IAC are to:

1. Work with local, provincial, and federal governments and other non-profits to help create initiatives, shape policies, access regular funding and work towards the decolonization of the Indigenous people in York Region,
2. Ensure our community has safe places to come, learn and pass along our traditional teachings for the next 7 generations,
3. Work with all levels of government to support their plans to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation report, and
4. Create an Indigenous Cultural Center with sustainable programs around family services, wellness and health, education, employment, and community outreach.

2022 IAC Events

The IAC presented Staff with the following list of events they are planning in 2022 and for which they are seeking the City's assistance in providing suitable locations free of facility permit/rental fees:

Event	Description	Date
Indigenous Culture Night	Monthly event for elder teachings, indigenous art and crafts, drum circles, medicine walks and other seasonally themed activities	April – December
Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	Candlelight Vigil	May 5
Indigenous Peoples Day	Summer solstice gathering with drum and fire circle and traditional dancers	June 21
International Indigenous Day	Traditional drum and fire circle	August 9
Truth and Reconciliation Day	Speaker event and candle light walk with sacred fire, drummers and traditional dancers	September 30
Indigenous Harvest Festival	Indigenous craft market, art showcase and live music with food trucks	October 14 - 16
WenJack Day	Medicine walk and drum circle	October 17 - 22
Indigenous Veteran's Day	To be determined working with the City and Legion	November 8

Staff are currently working with the IAC to determine sites for the events listed above. Different events may require different sites given anticipated attendance numbers and varying amenity needs. However, the IAC has expressed a desire for events to be held consistently in a single location to the extent possible in an effort to work towards their goal of creating an Indigenous Cultural Centre.

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The IAC has also indicated interest in participating in the City's Canada Day event, which would add a very welcome indigenous component to this annual celebration. Staff will continue to collaborate with IAC with respect to Canada Day and will also discuss potential opportunities for collaboration around Truth and Reconciliation Day and Indigenous Veteran's Day activities.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

Consistent with the March 9 Council direction Staff are working with IAC to arrange for their use of City facilities and park sites free of rental fees over the next year. It is expected that IAC will be covering all other costs associated with facilitating their events and activities.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Working with the IAC is directly related to the Council strategic priority of fostering a Strong Sense of Belonging.

Climate Change Considerations:

Climate change considerations are not applicable to this staff report.

Conclusion:

On March 9, 2022 Council directed Staff to work with the IAC to determine an appropriate facility for the IAC to use rent-free for a one year pilot. Staff met with members of the IAC on March 18 and learned that the short-term goals of IAC focus on being a voice for the Indigenous people in Richmond Hill and York Region, and bringing the Indigenous community together for teachings, gatherings and events which will create greater access to, and foster increased awareness of, Indigenous culture.

The IAC has provided a list of events that they plan to facilitate in 2022 and Staff are working with IAC to determine rent-free sites for these events. Staff will also collaborate with IAC to ensure that the City's 2022 Canada Day event is inclusive of the Indigenous community and to determine opportunities for collaboration around Truth and Reconciliation Day and Indigenous Veteran's Day activities.

Staff will report back to Council at the end of the 1 year pilot period.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.22.07 Indigenous Action Committee.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 30, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tracey Steele - Mar 30, 2022 - 4:06 PM

Darlene Joslin - Mar 30, 2022 - 5:16 PM