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YORK REGION TOURISM ADVISORY GROUP

(Regional Council at its meeting on February 19, 2004, amended the foregoing Clause to provide that Regional Councillor Scarpitti also be appointed to the York Region Tourism Advisory Group.)

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, January 9, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, and advises that upon adoption by Regional Council, the Regional Chair indicated that he will be appointing Mayor Sherban to the York Region Tourism Advisory Group as Regional Council liaison for this term of Council:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve the Terms of Reference for the York Region Tourism Advisory Group as outlined in this report.
2. That the Regional Chair be authorized to appoint up to twelve individuals that represent the tourism industry in York Region to the Tourism Advisory Group.
3. A member from the Planning and Economic Development Committee be appointed to the York Region Tourism Advisory Group as Regional Council liaison.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Regional Council the terms of reference and the appointment of members to the York Region Tourism Advisory Group.

3. BACKGROUND

In late 2002, focus group sessions with the tourism industry were held to review and consult on the Region's proposed tourism direction. One of the recommended actions was to formally approve of a Regional Tourism Advisory Group. At their meeting in January 2004, the Planning and Economic Development Committee considered a staff report on the 2004 Tourism Marketing Plan. That report recommended that a Regional Tourism Advisory Group be established and that staff bring back a report on the terms of reference and appointments to the Planning Committee.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The York Region Tourism Advisory Group will assist in building the Region's tourism profile and be ambassadors for the tourism program at private and public sector levels. This Advisory Group will enable the Region to better co-ordinate efforts and strengthen partnerships in order to position York Region as a viable year-round tourism destination.

This Advisory Group will act as a catalyst to build more effective partner-based approaches with Tourism stakeholders, Municipalities, Chambers, Business Improvement Associations and all levels of government to ensure responsible and sustainable tourism development.

Staff will rely on input from this industry led working Advisory Group to collaborate in the development of marketing strategies, tactics and partnership programs to ensure the Region's tourism program continues be industry led and customer driven.

This Advisory Group will broaden the scope of information that goes into the decision making process to determine the Region's strategic tourism direction and actions, now and in the future.

4.1 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group are attached to this report.

4.1.1 Purpose of the Tourism Advisory Group

The purpose of the York Region Tourism Advisory Group is to:

- Assist Regional Council and staff in developing plans and policies to support and promote tourism in York Region.
- Provide a forum for tourism industry input and information exchange on issues affecting tourism in York Region.
- Review studies, plans and proposals from senior level government or other tourism organizations that may affect tourism in York Region.
- Provide comments and recommendations as requested by Regional Council on matters that may affect tourism.
- Encourage greater public awareness of tourism and act as ambassadors for the tourism industry in York Region.
- Assist in the development of longer-term partnerships and collaborative marketing and promotional opportunities between the Regional Municipality of York and industry stakeholders.

4.1.2 Tourism Advisory Group Composition

The Tourism Advisory Group will consist of thirteen (13) volunteer members who are to be appointed by the Regional Chair for a three (3) year term.

Staff recommends that twelve (12) members be appointed from a cross section of the York Region Tourism Community including representatives from the Accommodations, Arts and Culture, Retail, Attractions, Events and Recreational sectors. A request for

Tourism Community Advisory Group Volunteers will be announced at the Tourism Annual General Meeting which is tentatively proposed for Wednesday, February 25. As well, area Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Business Improvement Associations and other organizations will be contacted to obtain their nominations of individuals within the tourism business community who may be interested in this opportunity. Applicants will submit their interest via letter to the Region of York Planning and Development Services Department. The Regional Chair would be authorized to appoint applicants who best fit the qualifications to serve on the Tourism Advisory Group.

Staff also recommend that one (1) member of the Planning and Economic Development Committee be appointed as Regional Council liaison to the Tourism Advisory Group.

4.1.3 Meetings

The Advisory Group will normally meet quarterly or more frequently as approved by the Advisory Group. Meetings may be held at various locations but will normally be held at the Regional Administrative Centre.

4.1.4 Staff Support and Administrative Matters

Staff of the Planning and Development Services Department will be designated to provide administrative, procedural or technical assistance for the Tourism Advisory Group. This more formal relationship with the tourism industry will improve the efficiency of staff efforts and improve communications with the industry. Staff will coordinate involvement of other Regional Departments and agencies as necessary and prepare reports as required by the work of the Advisory Group. Minutes from the Tourism Advisory Group meetings will be included for circulation at the Planning and Economic Development Committee meetings.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

This initiative supports the “Engaged Communities” and the “Responsive Region” Goals of Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no direct financial implications to the Region in the establishment of the York Region Tourism Advisory Group. Staff and administrative support costs for the Tourism Advisory Group will be part of the Planning and Economic Development annual operating budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The tourism industry plays an integral role in social and cultural development as well as, being a major economic generator and employment base for local municipalities. Staff will ensure that the Tourism Advisory Group configuration will represent the diverse municipal needs.

7. CONCLUSION

The Tourism Advisory Group is an important vehicle to ensure the needs of the industry are being fulfilled and are key communication tools between the local tourism industry, all levels of government and the Region. Staff will rely on input from this industry led working Advisory Group to collaborate in the development of marketing strategies, tactics and partnership programs which support economic growth, tourism business sustainability and assist in setting out the Region's future tourism vision.

It is recommended that Regional Council approve the function of a York Region Tourism Advisory Group as outlined in this report.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and a copy thereof is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)