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KEYNOTE CONFERENCE & MEETING PLANNER

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, March 5, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council an overview on the production and distribution of the KeyNote Conference & Meeting Planner.

3. BACKGROUND

In October 2002, Regional Council approved the 2003 Tourism Marketing Plan which identified working with the tourism industry to determine strategic initiatives which target the meetings, corporate and conference markets.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The meetings, conference and corporate business represent a core market for many of the Region's accommodation facilities including the Sheraton and Best Western Parkway Hotel, Hilton Suites Conference Centre and Spa, Briars Resort & Conference Centre, Kingbridge Centre just to name a few, plus a variety of Conference and Banquet Centres and unique venues from golf courses and attractions. With the loss of business from SARS and the fierce competition to rebuild the business sector back into Toronto and the GTA, the York Region Hotel Marketing Committee determined that there was a need to work cooperatively to develop a publication to position the area as prime destination for this market segment.

4.1 KeyNote Conference and Meeting Planner Production

The York Region Hotel Marketing Committee reviewed three quotes to determine an agency to produce the publication and selected Lenmark Communications Ltd. Staff facilitated the production of the KeyNote Conference & Meeting Planner under the direction of the York Region Hotel Marketing Committee. Ten thousand copies of the KeyNote Conference & Meeting Planner were printed for a targeted distribution to meeting and corporate planners. Nineteen industry partners purchased advertising in the Planner making the production of the project totally cost recoverable.

The participating partners included Main Street Unionville, Angus Glen Golf Club, Best Western Parkway Hotel Toronto North, The Briars Resort & Conference Centre, Comfort Inn Toronto/Markham, Eagles Nest Golf Club, Eaton Hall Inn & Conference Centre, Georgina Resort & Conference Centre, Hilton Garden Inn Toronto/Markham, Hilton Suites Toronto/Markham Conference Centre and Spa, Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Toronto/Markham, Howard Johnson Hotel Toronto/Markham, The Kingbridge Centre, Le Parc Conference & Banquet Centre, Monte Carlo Inn Toronto/Markham, Pheasant Run Golf Club, Radisson Hotel Toronto/Markham Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel and The Staybridge Suites Toronto/Markham..

4.2 Marketing and Distribution

The strategic marketing and distribution plan for the KeyNote Planner was included in the “Meet n Play” component of the SARS Recovery Funding submission to the Province of Ontario.

At the Tourism Annual General Conference on February 25, 2004, MPP Tony Wong announced that the Province would be financially supporting the Region’s SARS Recovery Proposal. This initiative includes the distribution of the KeyNote Planner to meeting planners, trade show participation, participation in trade shows, a familiarization tour plus strategic advertising and promotions.

4.3 Next Steps

A comprehensive report on the SARS Recovery submission to the Province which included a “Meet n Play” and “Stay n Play” marketing program is a companion report to this agenda. Staff will also report back the results of the SARS Recovery Program upon completion of the project.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

Promoting the economic health and prosperity of the Region is essential in achieving the Vibrant Economy Goal of Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There was no cost to the Region to produce the KeyNote Conference and Meeting Planner. The publication cost \$17,880 (+taxes) to produce and revenues generated from advertising sales fully covered the production cost. The marketing and distribution campaign for the Planner will be financed through the Town of Markham, Tourism industry, York Region and Provincially funded SARS Recovery Program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The KeyNote Meeting & Conference Planner will assist in positioning the Region as a prime destination for meetings, conventions and company functions. The increase in business traffic will have positive economic spin off for retail, dining, attraction and other tourism businesses within the area Municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The KeyNote Conference & Meeting Planner is a result of the tourism industry working collaboratively to increase corporate, meeting and conference business through a strategic and targeted approach.

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing has been forwarded to each Member of Council with the April 7, 2004 Planning and Economic Development Committee agenda and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)