

Doors Open Markham 2020 – Event Day Saturday, September 12

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, June 4, 2020

Meeting Held Remotely Via Zoom

Due to COVID-19 Situation

Present:

K. Ng, Chair; A. Fuyarchuk, Vice-Chair; Councillor A. Keyes, Councillor R. McAlpine, N. Hendricks, M. S. Khan, K. Meraj, E. Yip, J. Zhang. A. McPhee had difficulty with the log-in password and offered comments following the meeting.

Guest: V. Campbell, Markham Village BIA.

Staff: G. Duncan, E. Girard, R. Paranchothy. Zoom meeting set up by C. Thorne.

The meeting began at 5:30 p.m., K. Ng in the Chair.

1. Confirmation of Agenda:

The agenda was accepted with no changes.

2. Minutes of March 5, 2020

The minutes of March 5, 2020 were accepted with no changes. As an item of business arising from the minutes, the Doors Open budget was discussed. The committee discussed the deficit in the Doors Open Markham account identified by the Finance Dept. If Doors Open Markham is cancelled for 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation, could the Celebrate Markham grant of \$7,500 be applied to pay down the deficit, so that in 2021, the Doors Open Markham funding can be re-set to its full amount? K. Ng agreed to contact the staff person at the City that manages the Celebrate Markham funds to ask the question. The Administration Committee of Council meets on July 7, 2020 and the allocation of Celebrate Markham funding is to be discussed then.

Although not specifically presented at the meeting of June 4, 2020, for the convenience of the committee, staff has included an excerpt from the minutes of January 23, 2020 that explains the deficit situation and provides the relevant numbers:

The Finance Department has advised staff of a deficit in the Doors Open Markham account of \$3,784.41. This is mainly due to the annual Ontario Heritage Trust registration fee of \$1,695 not being accounted for in the spending of the annual Celebrate Markham grant of \$7,500 for the years 2018 and 2019. This deficit can be paid down over time by the committee not spending the full grant amount. For 2020, if the registration fee of \$1,695 is deducted from \$7,500, the actual amount of available funds is \$5,805.

3. Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Situation on the September 12 Doors Open Markham Event

E. Girard noted that all City events are cancelled until the end of August. At this time it is not clear what will happen regarding events in Markham after that date. Some events such as Canada Day are being done as virtual events. Others are being cancelled outright.

G. Duncan has contacted the Ontario Heritage Trust/Doors Open Ontario to learn about what the approach is on the provincial level. All spring Doors Open events were cancelled by Doors Open Ontario, but summer and fall ones remain scheduled. They said that communities, at this time, may decide for themselves whether to go ahead with their events or cancel. There are 16 Doors Open events in September. Three of the 16 communities have cancelled so far: Brockton (Sept. 26), Burlington (Sept. 7) and Windsor (Sept. 26-27).

The committee discussed this topic at length. Three options were considered:

Continue planning for the September 12, 2020 event as if it is going ahead

A selection of repeat sites from previous years has already been confirmed. A. Fuyarchuk has also arranged for programming at the Markham Village Train Station. The list includes:

- Thornhill Village Library
- Heintzman House
- Stiver Mill
- Unionville Train Station
- Varley Art Gallery
- Markham Village Train Station
- Markham Village Fire Hall
- Rouge River Brewery

Discussion included if there will be time to advertise and otherwise plan the event if the committee pauses until summer, when more information is known about late summer/early fall City events. If the event is likely to be cancelled, is it worth continuing to put the effort in to plan for it? The question came up about if there is a cut-off date to cancel from Doors Open Ontario. G. Duncan will contact the Ontario Heritage Trust/Doors Open Ontario to find out. The idea of holding a scaled-down Doors Open event was also discussed. There would be less effort in terms of planning for site programming and contact with site owners, but no cost savings. Most expenditures relate to event promotion.

Hold a Virtual Doors Open Markham

E. Girard spoke about the option of holding a virtual Doors Open event. Other City events are being done in this way. She noted seeing some virtual Doors Open material on the Doors Open

Ontario website. The question came up if this would be an extra cost – G. Duncan will contact the Ontario Heritage Trust/Doors Open Ontario to find out.

Committee members were generally of the opinion that Doors Open should be an in-person experience to be an effective, meaningful event. The committee did not outright reject the idea, but rather indicated that it was not a favoured option.

Cancel Doors Open Markham for 2020

A number of committee members spoke in favour of cancelling Doors Open Markham this year due to the uncertainty around the COVID-19 situation. Council has not yet taken a position on fall events – however, the Markham Fair in October has already been cancelled. Markham’s approach to re-opening was characterized by the Council representatives on the committee as “cautious.”

Even if events of a certain scale and type are permitted to go ahead, in the case of Doors Open visitors may be reluctant to participate, and site owners may or may not be open to visitors and managing appropriate social distancing and hygiene. The Ontario Heritage Trust has advised that the registration fee would be carried over to next year, if a community decides to cancel. Staff was unsure if the provincial theme, being “Environment” will be carried over to 2021. Themes have been set out in advance for the next several years.

4. Site Selection - Continued

Refer to list of current confirmed sites noted above.

5. Next Steps

Councillor A. Keyes proposed that the Doors Open Markham Organizing Committee defer making a decision about whether or not to proceed with the 2020 Doors Open Markham event until after Council has met on July 14, 2020 to confirm the Administration Committee’s position on the status of Celebrate Markham funding, to be determined July 7, 2020. The committee members agreed to the Councillor’s proposal.

G, Duncan was asked to contact the operators of the confirmed sites to advise them of the present status of Doors Open Markham.

6. New Business

There were no items of new business.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Doors Open Markham Organizing Committee will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2020, remotely via Zoom. Time: 5:30 p.m.

The meeting wrapped about at about 6:50 p.m.