



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: December 6, 2016

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**SUBJECT:** Naming of the New Community Centre and Library in South East Markham  
**PREPARED BY:** Mary Creighton, Director, Recreation Services

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the report "Naming of the New Community Centre and Library in South East Markham" be received; and
- 2) That Council approve "Aaniin Community Centre and Library" as the name for the new centre in South East Markham;
- 3) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for the name of the new community centre and library in South East Markham which will be opening in Fall 2017.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Facility and Park Naming Policy for facilities and parks, which was approved by Council in April of 2012, established the process and criteria for naming, renaming or dedicating facilities and parks, including methods by which the public may provide suggestions and comments.

**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

At the General Committee meeting of November 14, 2016 staff presented to General Committee a list of 5 proposed names for consideration as per the Facility and Park Naming policy for the new community centre and library in south east Markham.

In total 22 submissions were received with rationale provided including information about the proposed name, civic, geographic or historic significance. As per the policy, staff undertook due diligence on all of the submissions and reported to General Committee on Nov 14, 2012 following discussions with the Mayor and local Councillor.

Staff recommended that Council consider one of the following names:

- a) Middlefield Mosaic Community Centre and Library
- b) Markham Mosaic Community Centre and Library
- c) Middlefield Community Centre and Library
- d) Markham South East Community Centre and Library
- e) Aaniin Community Centre and Library

Based on the names presented by staff General Committee recommended that the new facility be named **Aaniin Community Centre and Library**.

In recognition of Canada celebrating its 150th birthday in 2017, which will be the year the centre will open, there was a suggestion to name the centre Aaniin which means "hello/welcome" in Ojibway. This would recognize the Aboriginal people who first

inhabited the lands now known as Markham. Aaniin is pronounced as "ah-nee". The City's Diversity plan, Everyone Welcome aligns with the Objway word 'Welcome.' Markham is welcoming many newcomers as Canada's most diverse City. Staff have tested the word among other languages and have not found any translation concerns. Using an aboriginal name would also align with the City's relationship with Fort Hope (Eabametoong).

As per the policy the community had a month to provide feedback on the proposed name before Council ratifies the name of the facility.

An ad was placed on the City page of the "Economist and Sun" advising the community of the proposed name, inviting comments online or by calling the contact centre. Comments were due no later than Monday December 5, 2016. Staff also through their ongoing engagement meetings with community groups within the South East area sought input on the name, including reaching out to a number of schools in the area.

### **Summary of Comments:**

During this period staff contacted Jill Thompson the Indigenous Cultural Advisor at UOIT to verify the spelling of **Aaniin**. Staff has modified the spelling through this report (from Aanin to Aaniin).

In total through the online submissions, contact centre and staff outreach there were a total of **40** comments received.

Overall the majority of comments identified that they supported the idea of naming the centre Aaniin to celebrate the Aboriginal people who first inhabited the lands now known as Markham. Many favorable comments about the name Aaniin, while some cautioned that Markham new comers might find it difficult to pronounce or that another aboriginal word should be considered.

Example of comments received in support of the name Aaniin included:

*I like it.*

*Love it. It honours and shows respect for the first people to inhabit the land.*

*I am in favour of honouring the Natives of Canada and would like the new branch to be named after Ojibwe. My only concern is that some people might not appreciate the importance of such a move therefore an educational program should be done so all Markham can appreciate this fact and history.*

*Good name, because of the recognition of the founders of our community. Initially strange, but eventually afterwards people will get used to it. Explain the name and people will accept it.*

*I support the name it is a great nod to Canadian culture.*

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As a result of the feedback from our residents and school groups the following actions will be undertaken:

- Interpretation signage within the Community Centre to explain the name, origins and connections to Markham's Diversity plan
- Communications plan to educate residents on significance
- Promotional educational materials at centre
- Collection of Aboriginal/Ojibway books at the library

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)**

Not Applicable

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not Applicable

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

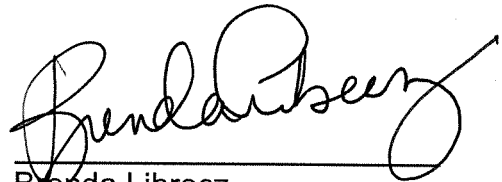
Not Applicable

**RECOMMENDED BY:**



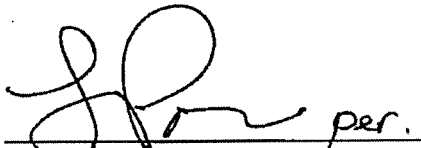
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Mary Creighton  
Director of Recreation Services



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Brenda Librecz  
Commissioner of Community  
& Fire Services



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Catherine Biss  
CEO, MPL