



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: November 28, 2016

SUBJECT: Friendship Agreement with Mullaitivu, Northern Province,
Sri Lanka

PREPARED BY: Stephen Chait – 4871 and Don Taylor - 5972

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the report titled Friendship Agreement with Mullaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka be received; and,
- 2) THAT the City of Markham invite the Sri Lankan Consul General in Toronto, Mr. U. L. M. Jauhar, and the High Commissioner of Canada in Sri Lanka, Shelley Whiting, to attend a signing ceremony for a friendship agreement between the City of Markham and Mullaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka on Saturday, January, 14, 2017; and,
- 3) 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 inform Council about preparations for the celebration of Thai Pongal in Markham on the weekend of January 14, 2017, including the hosting of a business networking event and the witnessing of the signing of a friendship agreement between the City of Markham and Mullaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Markham has celebrated Thai Pongal for the past five (5) years. Thai Pongal is a global Tamil celebration of the harvest and the new moon (New Year).

Markham is home to a growing and dynamic Tamil community, with approximately 30,000 people of Tamil origin.

The City of Markham has been developing strong connections with the Tamil community in Canada and in South Asia. Mayor Scarpitti visited the Tamil community of Chennai in Nadu, India in 2013. Former Mayor Cousens visited the Mayor of Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2003. Markham councilors and staff attend the Canadian Tamil Chamber of Commerce awards gala annually.

This year's Thai Pongal ceremony in Markham is being organized by the Centre for Tamil Heritage and Culture. The City of Markham has invited the Hon. Justice C. V. Wigneswaran, Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Council – Jaffna, to be present to sign a friendship agreement between Markham and Mullaitivu, Northern Province. Mullaitivu District is located in northeast Sri Lanka, and has a population of approximately 92,000.

The main objective of the Agreement is to actively examine and evaluate opportunities to foster the economic development (including tourism) and cultural health and betterment of Tamil communities in Markham and Mullaitivu in the Northern Province.

The City of Markham's Culture & Economic Development Department will host a business networking event on Saturday January 14, 2017, prior to the signing of the friendship agreement in the Council chambers. This networking event is expected to attract 80-100 Canadian Tamil business leaders, and will focus on sharing information on how to do business in Markham and in Sri Lanka. At the end of the business networking event, Mayor Scarpitti and the Chief Minister will be invited to sign the agreement.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable


HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS


Not applicable

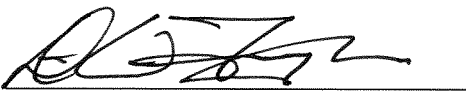
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The signing of a friendship agreement between the City of Markham and Mullaitivu, Northern Province, Sri Lanka is in alignment with the City of Markham's Economic strategy, Markham 2020.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**RECOMMENDED BY:**


for Andy Taylor


Stephen Chait


Don Taylor

ATTACHMENT:

FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN MULLAITIVU, NORTHERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA AND THE CITY OF MARKHAM

FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT
BY AND BETWEEN

MULLAITIVU, NORTHERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA
AND
THE CITY OF MARKHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA

- WHEREAS The City of Markham is the home to 30,000 people of Tamil origin, and the Mayor of Markham and his predecessor have visited centres of Tamil population in India and Sri Lanka,
- AND WHEREAS Canada is the largest diaspora in the world for people of Tamil origin, and the Greater Toronto Area is the largest Tamil diaspora within Canada,
- AND WHEREAS The City of Markham has, for the past five (5) years, celebrated Thai Pongal, a global Tamil celebration of the harvest and the new moon (New Year),
- AND WHEREAS The City of Markham has invited the participation of the Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Council, the Hon. Justice C. V. Wigneswaran, to be present at the proceedings at the Markham Civic Centre,
- AND WHEREAS The City of Markham desires to enter into a friendship agreement with Mullaitivu, Northern Province for the purposes of forging strong and enduring cultural and economic development relations,

NOW THEREFORE The City of Markham and Mullaitivu, Northern Province agree to the following:

THAT the Parties actively examine and evaluate opportunities to enhance the economic development and cultural health and betterment of their respective communities, and,

THAT the Parties strive to keep each other informed on important economic development and cultural issues, and,

THAT the Parties provide information, liaison, and support to prospective community groups interested in developing links between both locations, and,

THAT the Parties plan the coordination of exchanges between their respective communities, and,

THAT the Parties undertake to promote public awareness of this agreement.

IN Witness, Whereof, the Parties have duly executed this Friendship Agreement, on this 14th day of January, 2017.

Hon. Justice C. V. Wigneswaran
Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Council
Sri Lanka

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor of Markham