



REPORT TO GENERAL COMMITTEE

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
Jim Sales, Commissioner of Community and Fire Services

PREPARED BY: As Above

DATE OF MEETING: February 20, 2006

SUBJECT: Royal Conservatory of Music
Proposal for a Community Music School in Markham

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the staff report entitled "Royal Conservatory of Music, Proposal for a Community Music School in Markham", dated February 20, 2006, be received;

AND THAT the deputation by Mr. Jeff Melanson, Dean, the RCM Community School, be received;

AND THAT a Working Group be established, consisting of a representative of the Royal Conservatory of Music, two Members of Markham Council, and a representative of the York Region District School Board, to explore opportunities and possible partnership arrangements for a Community Music School in Markham;

AND FURTHER THAT Ward 3 Councillor Joseph Virgilio be one of the Markham Council representatives on the Working Group, and serve as Chair of the Group.

PURPOSE:

Mr. Jeff Melanson, Dean of the Royal Conservatory of Music Community School program, is to address the General Committee of Council on February 20, 2006, in regard to RCM's interest in establishing a Community Music School in the Town of Markham. The purpose of this report is to provide background to the deputation, and to recommend that a Working Group be formed to explore opportunities and possible partnership arrangements. The Working Group would report back to Council with its findings.

BACKGROUND:

The Royal Conservatory of Music was founded in 1886 and is the oldest and largest independent arts educator in Canada. It is a national not-for-profit institution, with annual revenues of more than \$27 million. More than 500,000 Canadians take part in RCM programs, exams and public school initiatives each year.

Key programs include:

- RCM Community Schools (GTA campuses in Toronto and Mississauga)
- The Glenn Gould School – internationally recognized – for gifted young musicians
- The Young Artists Performance Academy
- Learning Through the Arts – public education partnership
- The Frederick Harris Music Co. Ltd – largest print-music publisher in Canada
- RCM Examinations – musical qualification exams conducted in 300 Canadian Communities.

DISCUSSION:

The Markham/Richmond Hill area accounts for the largest concentration of RCM music students in the GTA. The RCM is looking to establish an additional community music school in the GTA, and would prefer a location in the Town of Markham, ideally in an area well served by public transit.

The RCM is looking for a partnership arrangement with the Town and/or the York District Board of Education, whereby the RCM could lease some 20,000 – 25,000 square feet of space for music school use. The facility would accommodate up to 5,000 music students per week, with music classes primarily held on evenings and weekends, and with early childhood day care/music education classes during the weekday hours. There is also the potential for the facility to accommodate office space for the RCM's international music exam administration program, which would require an additional 20,000 square feet of office space.

Ward 3 Councillor Joseph Virgilio and Mr. Jeff Melanson, Dean of the RCM Community School program, both participated in the recent Premier's Tour to China, and Councillor Virgilio became aware of the RCM's interest in Markham at that time. A number of discussions have since taken place, including a meeting on February 9, 2006 at the Town of Markham, with Councillor Virgilio and Mr. Melanson in attendance, along with Mayor Cousens, Commissioners Sales and Baird, and Mr. Don Taylor of the CAO's office. Preliminary contact has also been made with the York Region District School Board.

At the February 9th meeting, it was agreed that arrangements would be made for Mr. Melanson to address the General Committee of Council in regard to his proposal, and that a recommendation be brought forward that a Working Group be struck, under the leadership of Councillor Virgilio, to explore opportunities and options. It was noted at the meeting that a world class centre for music education would be of great benefit to Markham residents and to the Town's cultural programs. Possible partnership arrangements between the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Unionville High School for the Arts and the Markham Theatre were noted. However, it was also noted that capital and operating funding would be significant issues.

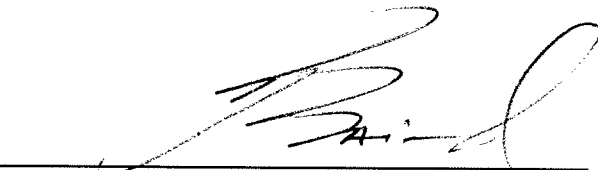
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

To be determined. Under Provincial legislation, cultural venues do not qualify for Development Charges capital funding. New construction, or capital improvements to any suitable existing space, would be dependent on corporate and community based fundraising. Provincial grants would be another potential source of capital funding. The Royal Conservatory is currently

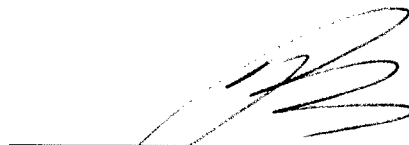
completing a successful fundraising campaign for the construction of a state of the art performance and learning centre in downtown Toronto (TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, under construction and scheduled to open Fall 2007). The Royal Conservatory also advises that they require outside financial support for ongoing operating costs. An endowment fund to cover operating costs has been suggested as a possible option. Staff have requested the Royal Conservatory to prepare a written submission to the Town outlining in greater detail their proposal and experience in similar fundraising projects.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Staff from all 3 Commissions and the CAO's office will participate in discussions should Committee and Council authorize the formation of a Working Group.



Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services



Jim Sales
Commissioner Community and Fire Services