



Report to: Mayor And Council

Date Report Authored: 28 March 2013

SUBJECT: REELWorld Film Festival - Markham Partnership
PREPARED BY: Brenda Librecz, Commissioner, Community & Fire Services

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the City of Markham support a partnership to host a REELWorld Film Festival in 2014 in Markham;
- 2) That Markham establish a REELWorld Markham Advisory Committee to support the development of the program in 2014;
- 3) That the Culture Department provides regular status reports on progress;
- 4) 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 authorize staff to develop a partnership with the REEL World Film Festival to expand its programming to Markham in 2014.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Markham has been presented with the opportunity to be the location of the expansion of an existing Film Festival based in Toronto. The **REELWorld Film Festival** has been in existence for 13 years promoting the work of diverse communities in Canada and internationally. Now in its 13th year and based in Toronto Canada, REEL World's *mandate is to create opportunities for racially diverse artists, particularly from the Aboriginal, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, South Asian and other racially diverse communities.*

The Mayor and staff from Community & Fire Services had the opportunity to meet with the REELWorld Chair Moe Jiwan and founder Tonya Lee Williams who has long distinguished career in film and in promoting opportunities for Canadians of diverse background to be successful in careers in Film and Television. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss bringing the REELWorld Film Festival to Markham in 2014.

Alignment to Culture and Diversity Plans:

This particular established film festival REELWorld provides a great opportunity to advance our Culture and Diversity Plan goals. The benefits to Markham will include increasing our profile as an economic and cultural centre within the GTA; it will present opportunities within Markham for our residents to see the work of outstanding Canadian filmmakers and to support the work of cultural communities in Markham and York Region.

Both our Culture and Diversity Plans place a high priority in engaging our newcomer and heritage communities in artistic and cultural endeavours such as Film production.

REELWorld Film Festival:

The REELWorld Festival is hosted every spring and the 2013 Festival will be held from April 10th to 14th in Toronto.

It is in its 13th year and will be screening over 5 days beginning April 10th in 2013 with an expected attendance of 3000 – 5000 for 70 films. Over half of the films are Canadian with the focus on promoting, encouraging, and showcasing both established and emerging film makers from Aboriginal, Asian, Black, Latino South Asian and other racially diverse communities.

REELWorld accepts Canadian and International submissions that reflect culturally and racially diverse content in the following ways:

- Featuring racially diverse people in prominent roles in film/video content
- Featuring racially diverse people in film/video creation
- REELWorld facilitates a forum where Canadian filmmakers, video makers and other industry artists can market skills and pitch ideas to producers and investors who seek fresh product or innovative concepts

REELWorld offers training and workshops for youth interested in the film industry. This presents an opportunity to partner with other City of Markham youth organizations.

REELWorld is currently supported by:

- City TV (a REELWorld Founding Partner), TD Bank, Telefilm Canada, Cineplex Entertainment, Ontario Film Development Corporation and the National Film Board
- Cineplex will be providing their venue at Yonge and Eglinton
- Tonya Lee Williams - Actress / Director / Producer / Festival Founder

REELWorld Markham 2014:

REELWorld discussed with Markham the opportunity to expand the existing Film Festival into Markham in 2014. The details on the 2014 expansion to Markham are still to be finalized over the next few weeks with the establishment of a REELWorld Markham Advisory Committee.

The intentions are to bring films over three days to a film friendly venue such as the Markham Flato Theatre, potentially the new Cineplex Theatre in Markham Centre, and/or the Cornell Rehearsal Hall. Staff are working on securing dates for 2014 at either or both the Markham Flato Theatre and the Cornell Rehearsal Hall. The program would include showing films from the REELWorld Film Festival and hosting a Gala Festival.

Mayor Scarpitti has indicated that he would establish an Advisory Committee to fundraise the costs to undertake the Markham component, to support the program and to assist in promoting and marketing the Markham program. The members of the Advisory

Committee would include: Markham Arts Council, York Arts Council, key business leaders, Mayor as chair, Council members, REELWorld chairman and representatives as determined by their Board and key tourism related businesses. The Advisory Board would be supported by staff in Culture Department and Corporate Communications.

Current Film Activity in Markham:

Film is a major entertainment source. With Markham's diverse population the range of film interest is very broad as seen with IIFA events as just one example. With the "Markham at the Movies" project by the Markham Arts Council supported by the Culture Department that brings TIFF run movies to Markham we are now seeing audiences of 300 to 500 for their monthly screenings. They have made themselves financially self sufficient for this activity.

Similar types of Media programs like the York Regional Police "Youth at Risk" program with a forensic photographer is one of many efforts to use media as a tool in youth engagement.

Another emerging film related activity is the Multimedia Film Festival of York Region (MFFYR) which the City of Markham has partnered with since its inception. An opportunity to link all these activities with REELWorld has great potential to expand Markham's film industry.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not Applicable - Festival will be self funded with in kind and staff support to be determined.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

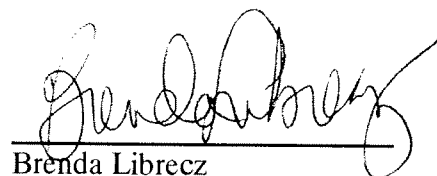
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Aligns with the Culture Plan and the Diversity Plan for Community Engagement and professional cultural development in Markham and also achieves the goals of the Economic Development Strategy.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Corporate Communications.

**RECOMMENDED
BY:**



Brenda Librecz
Commissioner, Community & Fire Services

