



TORONTO STAFF REPORT

December 15, 2003

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture & Tourism

Subject: Toronto Kalachakra 2004 and visit by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
All Wards

Purpose:

To report as requested by the Economic Development and Parks Committee at its meeting of May 5, 2003 on the requirements of office space and security requirements respecting the visit by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Toronto in April 2004.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications arising from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

At its meeting on May 5, 2003, the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario made a presentation to the Economic Development and Parks Committee (EDPC) on the visit by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama to Toronto in April 2004 and asked for the City's support. At that time, committee requested staff to report back on office space and security requirements for this visit.

In 2001, His Holiness accepted an invitation by the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario confirming the Kalachakra Initiation for World Peace in Toronto. A news conference was held on July 8, 2002 in Toronto to make the announcement.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will visit Toronto from April 23 to May 6, 2004 to conduct the Kalachakra, also known as the "Wheel of Time" - the religious teaching and rituals particularly sacred to Tibetan Buddhists. Although the Dalai Lama has visited Toronto in 1980 and 1990, his visit in 2004 will mark the first time His Holiness will conduct the Kalachakra. Prior to His Holiness arriving in Toronto in April 2004, he is scheduled to visit Vancouver and Ottawa.

The Kalachakra initiation is the largest Buddhist ritual regularly conferred by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. It is traditionally given to large groups of people assembled from around the world and is considered a special blessing for those who participate and for the environment in which it is given.

The foundations of Kalachakra rely upon the basic Buddhist tenets of the Four Noble Truths. The initiation confers on the practitioner permission to begin the study and practice of the Kalachakra Tantra. For those who are not Buddhists, the initiation can be taken as a blessing. For everyone involved, regardless of the level of participation, the Kalachakra serves as a universal prayer for the development of the ethics of peace and harmony within one's self and humanity.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. He was born in northern Tibet in 1935 and was recognized at the age of two as the fourteenth reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. His tireless commitment to world peace has been highly praised. In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Comments:

i) The Event Details

Incorporated in 1980, the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario, is a non-profit organization representing 3,000 Tibetans living in the province of Ontario. For the purposes of the Dalai Lama visit to Toronto, this organization has formed the Kalachakra Organizing Committee (KOC). The KOC is responsible for developing organizational and financing plans as well as the official itinerary for the spring visit.

The KOC estimates attendance in Toronto to reach upwards of 20,000 during the week of the Dalai Lama's visit (April 25 to May 5, 2004). The event will draw visitors from all over Canada and around the world, particularly from the U.S. Border States. His Holiness is expected to draw significant international media attention and it is anticipated that a number of celebrities will also be in attendance. The most recent Kalachakra was held in Graz, Austria in October 2002 where an audience of 10,000 people participated.

The main event, the religious teachings, will take place at the National Trade Centre at Exhibition Place. The religious teachings are all ticketed events. An interfaith gathering aimed at university students is also planned at the University of Toronto. The public event is scheduled for the evening of Sunday, April 25 at the SkyDome and organizers are predicting an audience in excess of 30,000 for the one-hour talk by His Holiness. In September 2003, His Holiness travelled to New York City where he held a public talk in Central Park where more than 65,000 attended. This event in Central Park was similar in scope to the event planned for the SkyDome.

The KOC first began its consultation with the City in February of 2003. Since that time, Tourism Division staff has provided the organizers with assistance in identifying office space,

possible funding options, information related to security measures and direction to assist in marketing the April event.

The organizers have been liaising with Tourism Division staff on an ongoing basis and have also met with the Events Support Team (inter-departmental) on several occasions to provide updates on the logistical plans related to the event. Representatives from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Toronto Police Services are also currently providing assistance and advice as necessary.

ii) Funding & Grant Assistance

During the consultation phase with the organizers, staff discussed several funding and grants programs. Of them, the City's Tourism Event Development Loan Program (TEDLP) - a program designed to support incorporated not-for-profit organizations with events of significant impact to the City, and the arts and culture grants available through the Toronto Arts Council were discussed.

Although initially interested in both of these programs, the organizers later indicated that they were not intending to pursue the TEDLP or the arts and culture grants. In December 2003, the KOC expressed renewed interest to staff on exploring the loan program and arts and culture grants.

Department staff have reviewed the KOC business plan and has concluded that their financial and marketing plans do not adequately address how the KOC plans to repay the City's loan given their financial and ticket sale projections, and secured funding to date. Staff has recommended not supporting the KOC's application for the loan program based on the concerns of their ability to repay the loan.

With regard to the arts and culture grants, staff provided timely information and direction to the organizers on the 2003 grants deadlines for the grants application submission. The organizers decided not to pursue this option but returned in December 2003 to seek assistance of staff once again. Given that the event is slated for late April, the organizers are not eligible to apply in the 2004 cycle as these grants are for projects commencing after June 1, 2004. As such, the arts and culture grants are not an option open to the organizers at this time.

Department staff also facilitated an introductory meeting with representatives from Ontario's Trillium Foundation. The Trillium Foundation assists not-for-profit organizations whose initiatives have the potential to increase the capacity and effectiveness of community organizations, encourage the continued growth of volunteerism, promote partnerships, support access and meet the diverse needs of Ontarians. Several follow up meetings were held between the Trillium Foundation and the KOC to establish eligibility aimed at a possible volunteer program grant. Again, the organizers decided not to pursue this option but are now reconsidering their position and may revisit the support of the Trillium Foundation.

In addition, during this period of consultation, Ontario's Tourism Event Marketing Partnership Program (TEMP) became available through the SARS Tourism Recovery Program. This

program was designed to assist in the marketing of tourism events and festivals across the province as a way of boosting local and regional economies post-SARS. With information supplied by staff, organizers have since filed an application for this program, although as of December 2003, no decision has been made.

iii) Marketing Assistance

To assist the KOC in marketing their event, Tourism Division has provided assistance to promote this event internally, where possible. For example, event posters will be distributed to all community recreation centres and libraries across the City early in 2004 – an offer extended by staff to the organizers. Earlier in 2003, staff prepared an ad for EDCT's Toronto Fun Guide for the Fall/Winter issue. A second quarter-page ad is planned for the 2004 Spring/Summer publication. Staff has also facilitated contact between the KOC and Tourism Toronto on a variety of different issues. Recently, Tourism Toronto committed to add the public event information (April 25, 2004 at the SkyDome) to their events listing.

iv) Office Space Requirements

Department staff has explored various short-term office space options for the KOC in preparation of the visit by His Holiness. In addition, staff of Corporate Services in Facilities and Real Estate also looked to identifying space at City-owned facilities that met the specifications laid out by the KOC. Their wish list included storefront office space, secured space with access to a boardroom and geographically located in the downtown area.

After considerable effort by staff, space was found at the Etobicoke Civic Centre and in the neighbouring area, however organizers felt the space was not adequate for their purposes and not easily accessible. The KOC thanked the City for its efforts but declined the City's offer of assistance. Organizers have since found downtown office space through their own means.

It should be noted that over the course of the year in 2003, in the lead up to this event, staff have facilitated in-kind meeting space at Metro Hall to the KOC on 24 separate occasions and will continue to assist in this regard as necessary.

v) Security Measures

In a letter from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, dated May, 2003, stated that security authorities were not in a position at that time, to consider appropriate security measures for the visit by the Dalai Lama in 2004. At the request of the event organizers, a meeting was held on July 14, 2003 which included staff from the City's Tourism, Protocol and Special Events offices; the Province's Office of International Relations and Protocol; Toronto Police Services and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

A second meeting was held on December 8, 2003, where the organizers met with the Events Support Team and representatives of the RCMP, the OPP and the Toronto Police Services. Security issues were discussed and further meetings have been planned for early in 2004. The

appropriate Protocol representatives' of all three levels of government are expected to be part of future discussions.

Site security falls under the jurisdiction of the Toronto Police Services. The Toronto Police Services in conjunction with RCMP can also provide some personal security measures. The Toronto Police Services will conduct their own security and facility needs assessment early in 2004.

It should be noted that His Holiness is not considered a head of state but a religious leader, and will be visiting Canada as an invited guest of the Canadian Tibetan Association, not officially by the Canadian Government. It will be the responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to determine the appropriate personal security requirements for His Holiness.

Conclusions:

A considerable amount of consultation and facilitation has been provided by Department staff to find suitable space from which the organizers could plan their event. Although staff was successful in finding short-term office space, the organizers respectfully declined the offer citing the space was not adequate for their purposes and not easily accessible.

At this time, security requirements for this event have not been fully evaluated and reported on, however, they are being considered by the appropriate security authorities including the RCMP, the OPP and the Toronto Police Services. Further meetings are planned to discuss the security issues with all organizers and the security stakeholders. Staff where possible, has assisted in facilitating those discussions with the security authorities through the Events Support Team.

In the early stages of planning for the visit by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, Department staff provided substantial direction and assistance to the organizers in seeking funding and grants channels to ensure this event is a success. However, the organizers, have on more than one occasion missed the window of opportunity to apply for the City's arts and grants programs and have not met the requirements of the loan program to merit a move forward recommendation by staff. In any event, Tourism Division staff will continue to assist the KOC with logistical advice and will ensure details of the event are widely communicated through tourism industry channels.

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