
BRIEFING NOTE

April 18, 2007

Corporate Sponsorship for Community Environment Days

Issue/Background:

For the past 17 years, the Community Environment Days Program has provided valuable outreach and waste diversion activities for the City of Toronto. Solid Waste Management Services has seen a significant increase in the quantity of waste diverted at these events over the last number of years. Community Environment Days have now expanded to showcase a wide range of environmental initiatives in Toronto. There are now dozens of things that residents can drop off, pick up and learn about.

At the request of Scarborough Community Council, Solid Waste Management Services brought forward a Staff Report to the April 5, 2007 meeting of the Public Works & Infrastructure (PWI) Committee regarding changing the name of the Community Environment Day Program to the “Bob Hunter Environment Day” Program. The Report was deferred to the May 2, 2007 meeting of PWI for consideration. In addition, staff were requested to submit a Briefing Note exploring the concept of sponsorship for Community Environment Days.

Key Points:

Should Council decide to seek corporate sponsorship for the Community Environment Days Program, City staff must issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to invite corporations on the bidders list to submit a proposal. The successful bidder would become the corporate sponsor for all 44 Community Environment Day events held each year. Since the 2007 Community Environment Day season has already begun, corporate sponsorship could not be undertaken for this year’s events.

Pros

- Corporate sponsorship of Community Environment Days could be beneficial as it would allow for cost sharing. A corporate sponsor could provide added value to the Program by offering additional services not feasible in the current Community Environment Days budget. For example, a corporate sponsor could increase the promotion of events, which might reach a larger audience.

Cons

- By aligning with a corporate sponsor, the City will have to yield the positive PR associated with the events to the successful bidder. For the past 17 years, the City of Toronto has successfully managed the Community Environment Days program, which is viewed by many residents and staff as a very positive outreach program that provides residents with a one-stop-shop to properly dispose of, recycle or reuse unwanted items. The positive PR associated with Community Environment Days should remain with the City.

- The mandate of Community Environment Days could be in conflict with the mandate of a corporate sponsor. While many corporations promote consumerism and the buying of goods, Community Environment Days promote reuse and reduction practices. Promoting the purchase of more goods is not a message that should be promoted at or through Community Environment Days. Many residents feel good that the Program provides them with an opportunity to do something positive for the environment.
- Community Environment Days are organized by Ward and are hosted by their respective Councillor. Adding a corporate name to an event could cause confusion. For example, if corporate sponsorship was received, a promotional piece would read “Come to Councillor John Doe’s [*Corporation name*] Environment Day”.
- Having a corporate sponsor associated with each event means that Councillors would “co-host” their event with the successful bidder. This would create an additional logistical complexity of liaising between three stakeholders (Solid Waste Management Services, Councillor, & Corporation).
- Since events are occasionally held on commercial property, there is the potential that corporate sponsorship could limit where an event is held if the successful bidder conflicts with an establishment in the retail park. This may be an issue in some Wards where locating another space large enough for our operational needs is challenging.
- Depending on the mandate of the successful bidder, the public’s perception of the events could become limited. For example, if the successful bidder’s mandate only focuses on waste management practices, the public may believe this is the only activity promoted at Community Environment Days. This is not the case. While the main impetus for Community Environment Days is waste diversion from landfill, staff, volunteers and community partners also promote water efficiency, energy efficiency, climate change programs, etc.

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