



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Marcus Garvey Centre for Leadership and Education

Date:	May 26, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	Ward 7 – York West
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update Council regarding the Marcus Garvey Centre for Leadership and Education (the Centre) and recommend that staff review and report on the resources required to effectively manage the Centre. The City has dual interests in the Centre both as landlord and a program interest in terms of strengthening community infrastructure in one of the City's priority neighbourhood areas.

The Centre is located in Jane-Finch, one of the 13 priority neighbourhood areas and is attempting to meet the needs of African Canadian communities. Program activity includes leadership development, basic literacy, academic upgrading, job skills training, job search, education and training for children, youth and adults. The need for these programs and services in this community is evident. However, the Centre is currently struggling to deliver on its mandate and has requested the City's assistance in the areas of community development, program and service development, facility management, financial planning and partnership development.

Although the facility at 160 Rivalda Road is currently under the jurisdiction of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, the Centre's mandate is more in line with that of the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division and Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration recommend that:

1. staff review the City's relationship with, and interest in, the Marcus Garvey Centre in order that the Centre may be appropriately assisted in responding to the social, educational and cultural needs in the community and report to Council on any recommended changes;
2. staff review the financial position of the Marcus Garvey Centre, their current and potential revenues and report to Council on the resources required to effectively manage the Centre; and,
3. efforts to recover outstanding fees and balances be suspended until the reasonable ability of the Centre to pay such amounts can be determined through recommendation (2) and reported to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of this report. However, based on the recommended review, there may be a need for additional financial support in the form of funding and/or continued assistance with respect to operating expenses.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 9, 1997, former City of North York Council, through resolution #97-15, directed that the building be dedicated for community uses such as leadership, training, basic trade skills and education. This was a legacy agreement resulting in a fifteen (15) year lease with the Marcus Garvey Centre for the purposes of a community centre and as a training centre for teaching computer skills and basic trades skills and to support micro businesses, training needs, skills upgrading, viable cottage industries and the aspirations of African Canadian youth. The Centre opened January 1, 2002 under a 15 year lease agreement ending December 31, 2016.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City has dual interests in the Centre both as landlord and a program interest in terms of strengthening community infrastructure in one of the City's priority neighbourhood areas.

The intended use for this facility is to provide a community centre, including a focus on training and development for African-Canadian youth. All leasehold improvements, training equipment, interior design, utilities and all other costs associated with maintaining the facility is the responsibility of the Marcus Garvey Centre.

For the past few years the Centre has been struggling to meet its mandate and for the past few months, they have been under particular scrutiny by both the media and the City's Auditor General's Office for non payment of utilities and improper use of the facility.

Issues Related to Tenancy

A number of issues have been identified with respect to the Centre not adhering to the terms of the lease with the City, including non payment of utilities and improper use of the facility.

The new Board of Directors acknowledges that the facility has been used for private events, a use not permitted by the original Council direction or lease agreement. The Board has agreed to cease this type of use. However, the Centre has requested to be able to hold fund-raising activities, related to the Centre's intended purpose, in order to raise sufficient funds to provide their core programs.

The use of facilities by external groups or individuals under appropriate conditions to generate revenues in off time periods is a common practice. Many of the 10 community centres operated by local boards (AOCCs) generate significant revenues in this way. As a part of the review, staff will determine if this is an appropriate revenue generating opportunity and under what conditions.

Initially the City paid utilities consisting of gas and hydro in 2002 and 2003. The Centre was invoiced for 2002 and 2003. In 2004 the Centre was billed directly for utilities and these were paid for by the Centre. In 2005 the Centre approached the City to request assistance with the operation of the Centre as they were having great difficulty with fund raising. Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division agreed to pay for the Marcus Garvey Centre's gas and hydro bills and provided exterior maintenance for the Centre during a transition period. The Division did not want to see the site deteriorate if the gas and hydro were cut off. The exterior maintenance was confined to litter picking and cutting a small area of turf. The City did not want to see the landscape and grounds deteriorate due to lack of necessary on-going maintenance. By not doing so, the City would have incurred greater capital renewal costs.

The City has paid a total of \$54,122 for gas and hydro on behalf of the Marcus Garvey Centre. As of October 1, 2007, the Marcus Garvey Centre has been billed directly for all utilities. On December 14, 2007, the Marcus Garvey Centre was issued an invoice by the City for gas and hydro in the amount of \$54,122. To date payment of this invoice has not been received.

Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff has met with the representatives of the Marcus Garvey Centre on numerous occasions and requested documentation from them such as financial statements, proof of proper use of the facility, Articles of Incorporation, etc. To date, the documentation requested has not been received.

City Legal has advised that the Centre is clearly in default of the Lease Agreement. Legal has also advised that the City is within its rights to exercise its legal remedies, including

termination of the Lease Agreement, if the Marcus Garvey Centre does not forward payment of utilities in arrears in the amount of \$54,122 and the information requested by Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff regarding the Centre.

Divisional Alignment Within the City

Parks, Forestry & Recreation has been working with the Marcus Garvey Centre since May 2007 to assist them in re-establishing themselves as a viable and responsible tenant and has been consulting with internal resources to assist the Board of Directors with a plan for these much needed services in the Jane/Sheppard/Finch area. The Division's core services provide opportunities to support and enhance lifelong health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities within the City, however it does not have the expertise in the area of community development involving education and training or basic trades skills. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff have engaged other City resources, including Social Development, Finance and Administration, to assist in helping the Centre respond effectively to the needs of the community they serve.

The Centre is similar in nature to a number of entities operating City facilities in partnership with the City. University Settlement House, Mid-Toronto Community Services and 519 Church Street Community Centre are examples of such partnerships. The Social Development, Finance and Administration Division has program responsibility for these entities and a mandate to work with groups addressing social inclusion/equity issues. The review recommended in this report will be conducted by Social Development, Finance and Administration with the support of Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Pending the results of the review, staff may recommend that the jurisdiction for the Centre be transferred to Social Development, Finance and Administration.

In November 2007, the Centre had sent a letter requesting that a Community Development Officer be provided by the City to assist them with their organization's development and to assist with various collaborative and strategic efforts working with other non-profit groups and City based services. In March 2008, the Centre also sent a letter the Chair of the Community Development and Recreation Committee requesting assistance from the City.

COMMENTS

The site is located in an industrial section of the city, in the priority neighbourhood of Jane-Finch, one of the 13 neighbourhood areas identified by Council. The purpose of the Centre is to provide a community centre, a training centre for teaching computer skills and basic trades skills and to support micro businesses, training needs, and skills upgrading, all of which are critical elements of community infrastructure.

To date the Centre has not been successful at accessing the resources required to meet the terms of the lease with the City of Toronto or those required to provide the range of programming contemplated at the time the building was made available to the African Canadian community. The City has dual interests in the Centre both as landlord and a program interest in terms of strengthening community infrastructure in one of the City's

priority neighbourhood areas. It is recommended that staff work with the Board of the Centre to determine the resources required to successfully operate and manage the Centre and report to Council on a sustainability plan.

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