

Submitted by
Councillor Wong-Tam

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Freshii wants to run a Nathan Phillips Square restaurant so much so that it will donate the profits

Toronto-based salad chain grabs city hall's attention by offering to turn over earnings to city environmental and health promotion programs.



FACEBOOK

Freshii, a growing chain that began in Toronto, wants to take over a highly visible new location in Nathan Phillips Square.

By: Paul Moloney City Hall Bureau reporter, Published on Tue Feb 26 2013

Restaurant chain Freshii is offering to donate its profits to the City of Toronto if the company is picked to operate the new restaurant in Nathan Phillips Square.

The company's offer comes after a bid from local burger chain Hero Certified Burgers was rejected. A new request for proposals is being drafted, and Freshii plans to bid.

"The city's been great to us," said CEO Matthew Corrin, who founded the business in Toronto in 2005. "We think this is a great opportunity to give back to the city."

Corrin estimated that annual profits from a restaurant in the square could run into hundreds of thousands — millions over the life of a multi-year lease.

"They have my attention, that's for sure," said Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, whose downtown ward includes city hall. "All they have to do is respond to the request for proposals," Wong-Tam said, adding the city is looking for something that gives visitors to the square a unique experience.

Freshii, with outlets in the downtown PATH system, Pearson International Airport and York University, features on-the-go salads, wraps, burritos, yogurts, soups and rice bowls.

News / City Hall

Hero burgers aren't super enough for city hall: Toronto snubs chain's bid to operate Nathan Phillips eatery

City councillors seeking more "diverse" menu items reject Hero's offer to run the new restaurant at City Hall.

By: Paul Moloney City Hall Bureau reporter, Published on Mon Feb 25 2013

Toronto councillors have turned down a bid from a local burger chain to set up a restaurant on the refurbished Nathan Phillips Square in front of city hall.

Members of council's government management committee voted 4-1 to cancel the bid, won by Hero Certified Burgers, a 41-store chain that features Angus beef from Alberta.

They want to look for another operator with a more "diverse" offering for the new restaurant designed as part of the \$51 million overhaul of the square.

Hero and three other companies responded to the city's request for proposals, issued in August. Staff recommended Hero's bid because it had the highest overall technical score and highest financial benefit.

"We put in an offer, we got selected, and I guess they don't want us," said John Lettieri, president and founder of Hero Certified Burgers.

"But what am I going to do, stand up and bark? I don't want to do that. If they don't want us there, they don't want us there."

Lettieri added he would be more upset if the city rolled out a new request for proposals and awarded the opportunity to another burger provider.

"We believe that this is a great fit for Nathan Phillips Square," he said. "It's a premium product. My personality is not to fight with these guys, but if it's my competition that's going in, then I've got issues."

City hall is already served by food trucks stationed on Queen St. that offer hamburgers, said Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, who represents the downtown area.

Wong-Tam said the city should explore a partnership with culinary schools in the city.

"I think we want to be able to add to the experience of those coming down to the square and make it as special as possible."

Councillor Paul Ainslie, chair of the committee, said councillors want to see something unique.