

From: [HCHC](#)
To: [Community Development and Recreation Committee](#)
Subject: My comments for 2016.CD12.6 on May 18, 2016 Community Development and Recreation Committee
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 10:13:20 AM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the May 18, 2016 Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting on item 2016.CD12.6, 2015 Allocations: Community Legacy Initiative, Follow-up

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

Councillors Community Development and Recreation Committee:

Ana Bailão

Jon Burnside

Josh Colle

Paula Fletcher

Joe Mihevc

James Pasternak (Chair)

RE: 2015 Allocations: Community Legacy Initiative, Follow-up

Dear Councillors:

The Hispanic Canadian Heritage Council (HCHC) is an umbrella organization constituted in 2008 by key organizations from the Hispanic Latino community of Toronto with a long and proven history of working with the community since 1973. The HCHC is a non-profit organization established with the purpose to highlight and promote the contribution of Hispanic culture to the evolving fabric of Canadian Heritage.

On July 15, 2015, the HCHC submitted to the City of Toronto the project "Pride to be Hispanic Latino in Canada". The goal was to build community capacity while creating a practical approach to economic and social development among the Latino Hispanic communities in Toronto. As a strategy of active community engagement by consolidating identity themes, culture and heritage, we proposed to promote pride and resilience through an education campaign.

Our proposal "Pride to be Hispanic Latino in Canada" was approved for the city of Toronto on Nov 3-4, 2015, under the Pan Am Games, Community Legacy Initiative (CLI).

The HCHC proposed to develop four components to achieve the goals of the "Pride to be Hispanic Latino in Canada" project:

- 1. A Latin American / Hispanic Food Experience.** The HCHC will work with the Latin American and Spanish restaurants in Toronto to showcase their menus at promotional price to the Hispanic and general population throughout the month of October. For this purpose, the HCHC will develop an Internet and Smartphone App.
- 2. Identity and empowering a Latino Hispanic Students Club programs.** Through the Heritage Month's activities, we are proposing to confront the school dropout among Latino Hispanic students with a mentoring program that will emphasize the advantage of being a high school graduate and go to college/university or have a skilled job.
- 3. Proud to be Hispanic Latino Campaign.** It will be a campaign implemented for HCHC in partnership with the Hispanic media, business and institutional partners, and will include dissemination of information about the Hispanic community in Toronto, their roots and their perspective in Toronto, during the activities of the Hispanic/Latin American Heritage Month.
- 4. Hispanic / Latino Identity Forum.** This will be the central piece dedicated to the analysis and reflection regarding the heritage month. The fundamental idea is this community conference that will bring together all components of the community to deliberate regarding the Latino, Hispanic and Aboriginal parts of the community history and culture and to create a working accord as to the problems, agreements and a public agenda dedicated to forge common views and actions within our Canadian context.

As you can see, **the HCHC project is about identity, our identity**, which is the most cherished and at the same time challenging issue for our community in Toronto and in Canada. The roots of this identity and community building goal lie at the sentiment of loss and community fractures inherited from our colonial history yet to be accepted and understood as one of the most important of the determinants of our cultural formation.

In this sense, our proposal embodies the willingness of the diverse community membership of our heritage council to work together to create and foster a greater identity for itself. A key outcome will also be to give the community a greater opportunity to become a full member within the broader community, taking it from the margins into the centre of civic life in Toronto.

Even though our project was approved by the council six months ago, and on March 16th, 2016 we signed the Letter of Understanding (LOU) which stated we will receive (\$175,000.00), we are still waiting for the funds to fully implement the four components of our project. And to make things worse, last week we were notified that the Executive Director of the Social Development, Finance and Administration Department of the City of Toronto is recommending to the Community Development and Recreation Committee, your committee, to cut approximately the 58 percent of this funding approved by the City Council for the HCHC.

We feel that we are being treated unfairly in this apparently unusual and unforeseen decision.

As you can read the same recommendations report made for the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration, the **"HCHC has met all the conditions on governance and accountability. HCHC has secured a Trustee for the grant and submitted a budget and work**

plan”.

You can also read in the very same report that “The City acknowledges that disagreement can be an indicator of healthy democracy within communities. While the City does not play an adjudicating role in community conflict it does offer support to communities to move toward a shared resolution of these conflicts by funding community processes which provides a safe and neutral space for respectful dialogue to address contentious legacy issues”.

However, despite its own logic, the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration is recommending the release of grant funds for the development of a mobile application to support a Latin American / Hispanic Food Experience event and to co-ordinate Hispanic Heritage Month (\$75,000.00) to the HCHC, and to direct the remainder of approved grant (\$100,000.00) to be re-issued through an open call for applications in September 2016 for a community dialogue on Hispanic and Latin identity in Toronto to strengthen and support this self-identified community to work toward achieving their shared goals.

Here it is important to note that this community dialogue was the unique proposal from the HCHC, as we stated before, “to bring together all components of the community to deliberate regarding the Latino, Hispanic and Aboriginal parts of the community history and culture and to create a working accord as to the problems, agreements and a public agenda dedicated to forge common views and actions within our Canadian context”.

Dear Councillors:

We are not asking you for an special treatment, we are asking you just to treat us as the city is treating the rest of community organizations that are receiving funds under the Pan Am Games, Community Legacy Initiative (CLI).

We are asking for a fair action in our case, and this fair action is, without a doubt, to release immediately the total amount (\$175,000.00) approved for our project "Pride to be Hispanic Latino in Canada”, to implement the four components approved for City Council on November 3 and 4 of 2015:

1. A Latin American / Hispanic Food Experience
2. Identity and empowering a Latino Hispanic Students Club programs
3. Proud to be Hispanic Latino Campaign.
4. Hispanic / Latino Identity Forum

Please help us to work together as Latin/Hispanic community to create and foster a greater identity for ourselves. You can be sure that 15 Hispanic/Latin American community organizations, and a fast growing community in Toronto will be deeply grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Oscar Vigil
Executive Director

Hispanic Canadian Heritage Council
www.hispaniccandianheritage.ca
1280 Finch Ave. West, Suite 203
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M3J 3K6 – Phone: (647) 303-6066