

City Council**Motion without Notice**

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| MM22.30 | ACTION | | | Ward:All |
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City of Toronto Support to Host the Parliament of World's Religions in 2018 - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2016 Economic Development and Culture Operating Budget by \$400,000 gross, zero net, funded from the Major Special Event Reserve Fund, to provide payment of \$400,000 to the Parliament of the World's Religions to fulfill the licensing fee requirement to host the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions, subject to the following conditions:

- a. the satisfactory completion of a structured application;
- b. provincial and federal funding are requested;
- c. a signed agreement including reporting requirements;
- d. a legacy program is developed with local and global activities; and
- e. a local not-for-profit host organizing committee is established.

2. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to report to Economic Development Committee following the event on the outcomes of the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions.

Summary

The Parliament of the World's Religions is an international interfaith summit first held in Chicago in 1893, and since 1993 has been hosted every four years by major cities around the world. The gathering, which attracts around 10,000 attendees, was "created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world."

Past host cities have included Cape Town, South Africa (1999) – 7,000 participants, Barcelona, Spain (2004) – 9,000 participants, Melbourne, Australia (2009) – 6,500 participants. In 2015,

the Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Salt Lake City and had the highest attendance to date of 10,359 participants.

The Toronto Area Interfaith Council, an organization of representatives of faith communities and groups in the Toronto area, is working with the Parliament of the World's Religions to bring the event to Toronto in 2018. Once secured, a corporation without shared capital (not-for-profit) would be incorporated in Canada to organize the event. The Parliament of World's Religions has indicated very recently that they are very interested in holding the next summit in Toronto and are requesting a firm commitment from the City as soon as possible.

If awarded, the event would be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, who will provide the venue in-kind to the organizers in the Fall of 2018. The event runs for five days and draws participants from around the globe.

This Motion recommends increasing the 2016 budget for Economic Development and Culture in order to allocate \$400,000 to cover the licensing fee to host the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions, with funding to be drawn from the Major Special Events Reserve Fund, based on a set of conditions outlined in this Motion. This fee is refundable if the Summit is not awarded to the City of Toronto.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM22.30