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## **A Commemorative Pride Bench Staff Report to Council**

Report Number: 2021-43

Department(s): Public Works Services, Recreation & Culture

Author(s): Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Service; Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture

Meeting Date: June 14, 2021

### **Recommendations**

1. That the report entitled A Commemorative Pride Bench dated June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 be received; and,
2. That the installation of a Pride Rainbow Bench, as attached in the report be approved; and,
3. That Staff work with York Region Pride to finalize installation logistics; and,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

### **Purpose**

The York Region Pride Organization has requested permission from the Town of Newmarket to install a Pride Rainbow Bench in commemoration of a founding member who passed away in 2020. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council for the installation of this type of bench. Note that the Town has a celebration bench program where benches can be purchased and plated to celebrate and/or commemorate specific individuals. This celebration bench program is administered by the Public Works Department with approval of plaques delegated by Council to the Public Works Department. Specifically this report seeks approval of Council to install a rainbow coloured bench, recognizing that the rainbow is a symbol of the Pride movement and installation of a bench signifies support of the Pride movement.

## Background

The York Region Pride organization, in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of operation, serves to organize festivals, events, entertainment, and other initiatives, which, in the context of sexuality and gender identity, illuminate and celebrate human diversity, captivate the general public, inspire inclusivity, and foster harmony and acceptance. Since 2017, the Town of Newmarket has been home to the flagship event – the Pride Parade and Festival. The Town has supported this through provision of event support, and in kind contributions.

In 2020, a founding member of the organization passed away. To commemorate the loss of this individual, York Region Pride approached Staff to inquire about the installation of a rainbow bench (see photo as reference).



Please note that the organization could proceed with a traditional bench and plaque under the Celebration Bench Program which is administered by the Public Works Department. However, York Region Pride has specifically requested that the bench be a rainbow bench – the organization has indicated that they are willing to cover the cost of the bench if the Town is willing to install the bench.

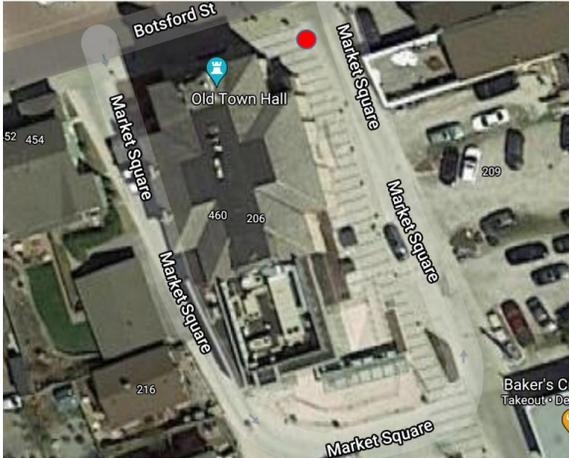
The rainbow has become an international symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two spirited (LGBTQ2S) pride and LGBTQ2S social movements. The colours reflect the identity and diversity of the LGBTQ2S community and serves as an outward symbol of support.

## Discussion

Staff met with York Region Pride representatives and determined two possible locations for the installation of a bench. Noting that the rainbow is an outward symbol of support for the community, it was important that locations considered had an appropriate level of visibility and prominence. Further, it is important that locations considered allowed for the bench to remain and did not require regular movement of the bench to accommodate other uses. While either location would be acceptable to the organization, the preference by York Region Pride was clearly for the Main Street location.

### First Location – Northeast Corner of Old Town Hall Property

The first location for consideration is the northeast corner of the Old Town Hall Property. (See red circle in photo below).



This location provides good visibility, would not require movement and would serve as a compliment to the current programming offered at Old Town Hall.

### Second (Preferred) Location – Main Street, Across from Clock Tower

The second location for consideration is on Main Street across from the Clock Tower. (See red circle in photo below).



This location provides greater visibility than the first location and would not require movement. Further, it would be located in a key location for the flagship event – the Pride Parade on Main Street.

## **Conclusion**

Staff are recommending that Council approve the installation of a Pride Bench at the Main Street location. Staff will then work with York Region Pride to finalize the installation details.

## **Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages**

Installation of a Pride Bench aligns with our core values of respect and integrity.

## **Consultation**

Both sites have been reviewed by York Region Pride.

## **Human Resource Considerations**

Town staff would be required to install the bench.

## **Budget Impact**

York Region Pride intends to cover the cost of purchasing the bench.

## **Attachments**

None.

## **Approval**

Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development and Infrastructure Services

Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture

Ian McDougall, Commissioner, Community Service

## **Contact**

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