

Cultural wish list part of town's master plan

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Councillor Susanne Hilton said. For instance, when it comes to things such as dance, drama and art, the town would only offer introductory courses so as not to clash with professional schools and groups in existence.

It is similar to the function of the leisure services master plan in delivering and a variety of sports and recreation to residents.

Councillor Harry Bowes called the document "a mass of motherhood statements" at Tuesday

night's council meeting.

Noting the document will be dealt with by the new council elected in November, he said, "I am glad a lame-duck council will not have to take on this responsibility."

Ms Hilton, who began working in the early 1990s on having culture officially recognized noted that with the acceptance of this document, "We are moving forward to doing something for culture in this town."

The committee, consisting of Mrs. Hilton, Mrs. Sherban, several members of the community,

such as Marg Brock, and town staffers Micole Ongman and Tom Graham of the leisure services department and Dorie Billich of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum, met at least 15 times to work out the wording of the policy.

The next step involves talking to local cultural groups and assessing buildings to see what they require and what the town should be doing. This and other research will result in a municipal cultural master plan as part of the next revision of the town's leisure services master plan to be completed by 2008.

The policy gives direction for such things as providing a cultural complex in Stouffville's downtown core and developing a strategy for long-term sustainability for Latcham Gallery.

"Now we have a systematic way of assessing what is needed," Ms Hilton noted.

This policy took a year to finalize, while council dickered over the wording. The town holds its own music and arts camps, helps with events such as Music in the Park, supports local groups such as the Latcham Gallery and is involved in promotion of local

arts groups in media with the town page in The Sun-Tribune and its own leisure guide.

Jim Sanders, who has fought to have culture recognized over the past couple of decades, including when he was councillor in the 1980s, was part of the municipal cultural policy task force.

With the town encouraging and supporting culture, it can now work on recommendations such as setting up a comprehensive grants program, hiring a cultural services co-ordinator and establishing a culture advisory committee.



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