

Special needs washroom will be a first in North America

BY ALI RAZA
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Stouffville will be home to a first in North America; a mobile washroom trailer for people with special needs.

Town council has endorsed the establishment of a bank account to fundraise for the

purchase of the trailer at the request of resident Diane Ward.

Ward also received council's approval to house the trailer on town property and make it available for rent to fairs and festival organizers.

Ward, who volunteers as the Markham

Fair's chair of the office committee, said the idea came to her after a meeting with Sutton District High School's special education teacher Derek Bunn, who had brought some students with special needs to the Markham Fair.

"Derek pointed out that because there were no change facilities, they (the students) could only stay for a couple hours," Ward said. "It's expensive for transportation to bring them down for just an hour or two."

After pondering over facility options with Bunn, Ward had an epiphany.

"The idea hit me," she said. "Why not build a trailer that we can share with all kinds of fairs and festivals?"

And so her campaign began. Bunn began looking for companies that could construct such a trailer, receiving quotes – and some rejection.

Ward approached the Regional Municipality of York for help earlier this year, but she became fed up with delays.

She soon started a crowd-funding campaign on GoFundMe, but with low exposure, the funds didn't suffice.

The total cost of the mobile washroom trailer stands at \$100,000.

With one last hope, Ward approached the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"I spoke to Justin (Mayor Altmann) and (acting CAO) Rob Raycroft," Ward said. "They were both enthusiastic, they said they'll do it

and somehow they'll work on it."

Another resident, Wilf Morley, has also come on board since he's been on many accessibility committees.

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Diane Ward
washroom proponent

Finding a trailer company to build the mobile washroom still proved challenging. Councillor Iain Lovatt recommended a firm, while leisure and community services director Raycroft sorted details of insurance and towing.

Ward said during the winter, the trailer would be stored after draining the pipes and replacing it with antifreeze.

She told councillors the trailer will be unique to Canada and the United States.

"I'm so grateful they agreed on something for once," Ward said regarding council's endorsement.

For information on how to send cheques for the mobile washroom trailer campaign, call Diane Ward at 905-473-1633.



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