



Staff Report

Community Services

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: December 10, 2018
Report Number: CSPW.18.076
Subject: Youth Friendly Designation
Prepared by: Ryan Gibbons, Acting Director of Community Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.18.076, entitled “Youth Friendly Designation”;

AND THAT Council support the Town’s application to Play Works to designate the Town of The Blue Mountains as a Youth Friendly Community, with a letter of support to be executed by the Mayor.

B. Overview

This report outlines a request for Council to support the Town’s application to Play Works to receive a Youth Friendly Community designation. The Youth Friendly Designation Program works to acknowledge the great work that communities are doing in ensuring their youth (ages 13 - 19) have continuous access to a diversity of 'play' (play being anything a young person does in his/her free time which could include: sport, recreation, drama, dance, music, the arts, volunteerism, leadership development, service leadership and/or civic engagement).

C. Background

Play Works is a group of organizations concerned about the future of youth. With representation from sport, physical activity, civic engagement, arts and culture, rural youth and recreation, Play Works aims to bring back the power of play to Ontario’s youth. It is dedicated to advancing play for 13- to 19-yearolds on local and provincial public and political agendas.

Each criterion required for the youth friendly designation links to at least one of the themes and outcomes of “Stepping Up”, the Ontario governments’ strategic framework to help Ontario’s youth succeed. This program is part of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services commitment to youth in Ontario.

There are currently 47 Youth Friendly Communities across Ontario and in 2018 Meaford was a successful recipient of this designation. Hanover and Kincardine have also received youth friendly designations which have led to the development of Hanover’s Launch Pad Youth Activity and Technology Centre the Kincardine and Area Youth Advisory Council (KAYAC).

Town Staff have partnered with The Blue Mountains Public Library and the Beaver Valley Outreach (BVO) to apply for the youth friendly designation. A local youth has been contracted to assist with compiling the data required for the submission.

Town Staff have been working with Georgian Bay Youth Roots (GBYR) comprised of a combination of Blue Mountains/Meaford Town Staff, councillors, service clubs, police, agencies and youth. GBYR is an organization committed to encouraging youth to become healthy, safe, hopeful, engaged, educated and contributing members of The Blue Mountains and the Municipality of Meaford. GBYR seeks to create connections and partnerships between youth and community so that opportunities are created for youth to lead, develop and thrive.

Through GBYR the Municipality of Meaford has shared feedback they received from Play Works regarding their successful application. The feedback identifies the criteria from the application that was not met and will assist The Blue Mountains with our submission. The Play Works feedback that will be received from the Town's application will also help further support efforts to become a youth friendly community.

D. Analysis

A community where youth have the space, support and freedom to play tends to have less crime and more post-secondary graduates. Fewer people use social services and more people use bike paths. A community where opportunities for recreation, arts, culture and civic responsibility bloom is one that is healthy, competitive and artistic.

Being designated Youth Friendly signals support of and commitment to the youth in our community, as elected officials from current Youth Friendly Communities attest. It can attract families by providing the kind of programs and services for their teenagers that say, "we like young people here"! It can help avoid the migration of young people to other communities by encouraging our youth to help guide the future of their own community.

Applying to be Youth Friendly helps communities realize their strong commitment to youth as they compile documentation illustrating the variety of available activities. The process of applying also helps identify possible gaps, as well as opportunities to become even more youth friendly.

The Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program acknowledges communities that are investing in youth play. With a Youth Friendly designation, our community will receive recognition through multiple channels:

- Formal presentation of the Youth Friendly Community status at a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum level at a distinguished event to which those who assisted with the community application are invited
- Communication to all municipalities in Ontario
- A news release to Ontario media

- Listing as a Youth Friendly Community on the Play Works website
- As a mentor to other communities wishing to become Youth Friendly

Being designated Youth Friendly enables our community to promote the designation by using the logo on resource materials, such as brochures, flyers and websites, as well as on community billboards and signs.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities and Partners
Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents
Objective #2 Use Technology to Advance Engagement
Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

Goal #3: Support Healthy Lifestyles
Objective #1 Promote the Town as a Healthy Community
Objective #4 Commit to Sustainability

F. Environmental Impacts

Not applicable

G. Financial Impact

The financial impact of applying for this designation is \$400.00 to help fund the youth assisting with preparation of the Town's submission. There are no additional costs anticipated with submitting an application.

H. In consultation with

Emma Barker, The Blue Mountains Public Library, Manager of Public Services

Melri Wright, Beaver Valley Outreach, Youth Engagement Coordinator

Jason Wepler, Grey Bruce Public Health Unit, Health Promoter

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Comments regarding this report should be submitted to the undersigned.

J. Attached

1. Draft Letter of Support from Mayor

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Gibbons
Acting Director of Community Services

For more information, please contact:

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December 10, 2018

Play Works
1 Concorde Gate, Suite 302
Toronto, ON
M3C 3N6

RE: Town of The Blue Mountains Youth Friendly Designation

Dear Play Works Representative,

Please accept this letter of support for the Town of The Blue Mountains application to become designated a Youth Friendly Community.

Youth make up an important and valued portion of our community; one that will ultimately shape the future of the Town of The Blue Mountains. The Town is committed to building a strong and sustainable community for our future generations to enjoy.

The Town continues to develop strong partnerships with local groups and organizations that provide a variety of opportunities and support for the youth in our community including Georgian Bay Youth Roots.

Our Council strongly supports efforts to obtain a Youth Friendly Community designation and ensure that the Town of The Blue Mountains welcomes, supports and empowers youth in our community.

Sincerely,

Alar Soever
Mayor
Town of The Blue Mountains