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Community Awards & Recognition Update Information Report

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the reintroduction of the Community Awards program, Sports Hall of Fame and Newmarket Celebrates the Arts, highlighting changes to the programs.

Background

The Town of Newmarket has always placed a significant emphasis to recognizing the unique and incredibly valuable contributions of individuals and organizations within our community – contributions that serve to strengthen the fabric of our community.

Historically, the Town of Newmarket hosted a bi-annual recognition event in April. At this event, awards were given for the following:

- Citizen of the Year
- Arts, Heritage & Culture Award
- Coach/Organizer Award
- Environmental Award of Merit
- Executive Board Member Award
- Raymond J. Twinney Memorial Youth Award
- Sponsor/Contributor Award
- Volunteer Program Leader

In addition to the Community Awards, the Sports Hall of Fame would conduct an induction ceremony, no more than once a year (but skipping some years) to recognize Community Awards & Recognition Update

significant athletic contributions and performances by Newmarket residents or within the Newmarket community.

Lastly, Newmarket would hold an event every second year called Newmarket Celebrates the Arts where grants were awarded to artists and event organizers.

These programs were paused during the COVID pandemic. They have not returned since the pandemic. Staff have used this time to conduct research on other community recognition programs, gain a better understanding of community demand, and to address operational challenges with the programs.

Discussion

Staff have identified some of the operational gaps and lack of coordination between the various recognition programs. Staff are moving forward with a strategy that includes an annual Community Awards Event that will recognize contributions in the broader community and bi-annual events (to be held alternating years) for Sport recognition and Arts & Culture recognition.

Annual Community Awards Celebration

The Town of Newmarket will move to an annual Community Awards Celebration, held in November. Awards will each be sponsored by a business. The following awards will be distributed:

Citizen of the Year (Sponsored by Alexander Muir/Venvi Living): This prestigious award honours an individual who exemplifies outstanding community spirit, leadership and volunteerism. The recipient is someone who consistently goes above and beyond to make Newmarket a better place.

Raymond J. Twinney Memorial Youth Award (Sponsored by Newmarket Hurricanes, Junior A Hockey Team): Named in memory of former Mayor Ray Twinney, this award honours a young person who demonstrates strong leadership, civic responsibility and a commitment to making a positive difference in the Community.

Environmental Award of Merit (Sponsored by Milwaukee Tool): Celebrating an individual, group or organization dedicated to environmental stewardship, this award recognizes exceptional efforts to protect, preserve and enhance Newmarket's natural surroundings through education, innovation or action.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Award (Sponsored by Qualicare): This award honours individuals or organizations who are leaders in promoting equity, inclusion and belonging. The recipient actively works to break down barriers and create a more inclusive, respectful and diverse Newmarket.

Mentoring Youth Award (Sponsored by Roadhouse & Rose Funeral Home): Presented to someone who has shown extraordinary dedication to mentoring and

empowering youth, this award acknowledges those who invest their time and energy to inspire the next generation through guidance, support and encouragement.

Seniors Champion/Advocate Award (Sponsored by Del Manor): This award recognizes an individual or organization that has made a meaningful contribution to improving the lives of seniors in Newmarket – through advocacy, programs or personal commitment to ensuring older adults feel supported and included.

Community Innovator Award (Sponsored by Neighbour Media): Given to someone who has introduced a creative solution, idea or initiative that has positively impacted the community, this award celebrates ingenuity and bold thinking that drives progress in Newmarket.

Healthy Lifestyle Advocate Award (Sponsored by Club Pilates Newmarket): This award acknowledges those who champion wellness in our community – through physical activity, mental health initiatives, or promoting balanced living – encouraging residents to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Random Acts of Kindness (ROAK) Award (Sponsored by Riverwalk Wealth): Recognizing a person or group whose spontaneous and selfless act of kindness had a lasting positive effect, this award celebrates the everyday heroes who inspire goodwill and compassion in our community.

Outstanding Volunteer Contribution Award (Sponsored by Magna International): This award pays tribute to a volunteer whose long-term dedication and tireless efforts have significantly enriched Newmarket. It recognizes the power of giving time and energy to make a lasting difference.

Nominations for the forementioned awards will be accepted until October 24th. Awards recipients will be selected by an Awards Committee of community volunteers. Awards will be given at a ceremony at Old Town Hall in mid November.

Bi-Annual Sports Recognition Celebration

Beginning in April, 2026, a bi-annual event will be held recognizing significant sport achievements in Newmarket or by Newmarket residents. This will include recognition of athletes who have achieved a provincial, national or international level of success; distribution of awards recognizing volunteer contributions; and inductions into the Sports Hall of Fame.

Bi-Annual Arts & Culture Recognition Celebration

Beginning in April, 2027, a bi-annual event will be held recognizing significant contributors to the Arts & Culture fabric of the Newmarket Community. This will include distribution of awards recognizing volunteer contributions; distribution of Newmarket

Celebrates the Arts Grants; and inductions into Newmarket's Wall of Fame – a new interactive wall recognizing artists from Newmarket who have gone on to a professional artistic career and have achieved national or international recognition currently under development.

Consultation

Not Applicable

Conclusion

This revised approach will serve to bring back the best elements of our previous recognition programs with enhancements to properly recognize the contributions by our community to make our community a better place.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Community and Economic Vibrancy

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable

Budget Impact

No budget impact – sponsorship revenue will cover costs associated with the event.

Attachments

Not Applicable

Approval for Distribution

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Report Contact

For more information on this report, contact info@newmarket.ca.