

Francophone and Francophile Cities Network of America – City of Saskatoon Membership

ISSUE

On March 19, 2019, the City of Saskatoon received a letter from Eric Lefol, General Manager of the Fédération des Francophones de Saskatoon (FFS), informing the Mayor and City Council of the benefits of membership in the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network of America (FFCANA). At the April 8, 2019 Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services meeting Eric Lefol, Scott Bell and Dustin McNichol (all of FFS) presented the history and background of the FFCANA and requested that the City of Saskatoon consider signing on as a member city.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that the City of Saskatoon become a member of the Francophone and Francophile Network Cities of America.

BACKGROUND

History

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, at its meeting held on April 8, 2019, considered the information presented by the FFCANA and the Committee resolved:

- “1. That the information be received; and
2. That the Administration submit a report providing an option for the City to affiliate with the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network of America and include engagement with the three organizations that brought this proposal forward, as well as with Tourism Saskatoon, as part of the review of this proposal.”

Public Engagement

Administration met with FFS on August 30, 2019. They confirmed the advantages of becoming a member of FFCANA emphasizing the purpose of the network which is to:

1. Preserve and promote shared French heritage and culture;
2. Generate productive relationships that benefit the tourism, cultural, and economic sectors;
3. Develop and promote unique tourist circuits based on their historic, linguistic, genealogic, economic and cultural ties with the French culture; and
4. Have privileged access to the vast potential of Francophone and Francophile tourists from all over Quebec, America and worldwide.

FFS, the local community organization, also gave an example of what they might ask of the City, which is to identify French speaking employees who work at City Hall to help with translation when needed.

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The FFCNA confirmed the statements above and emphasized the need for connections between and amongst Francophone communities in Saskatchewan in the tourism, cultural and economic sectors. They confirmed there is no cost to join the network nor any expectation of receiving City funding. The expectations, as outlined in the FFCNA Strategic Plan (see Appendix 1), are shown below:

Responsibilities of member cities:

1. Consolidate partnerships with local and provincial Francophone organizations;
2. Collaborate with other member cities on the valorization of the Francophonie;
3. Develop authentic and sustainable tourist routes; and
4. Enhance and promote their tourist attractions linked to the Francophonie.

Responsibilities of the Network:

1. Support the development of tourist routes;
2. Create tools and services for member cities;
3. Support projects through seeking of funding and resources;
4. Promote member cities and their tourist attractions; and
5. Organize yearly training meetings for member cities.

Tourism Saskatoon expressed support for the City to become a member of the FFCANA as there has been an increase in inquiries and travel to Saskatoon from both French-speaking Canadians and France. This may be due to recent investment in promotion of Metis Culture through projects such as the Trails of 1885, and new Indigenous products and experiences being developed in Saskatoon and the region. Further to this networking through the FFCANA will aid in tourism promotion.

Presently the only city in Saskatchewan that is a member of the FFCANA is Prince Albert, having signed in March 2019.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The City of Saskatoon has had ongoing communications and relations with FFS, the local organization, for at least a decade and they are a known entity and trusted community partner. The FFCANA is a relatively new organization, having been formed in 2015.

Given the information gathered from speaking to the three stakeholders, as well as with the City of Prince Albert, the City of Saskatoon would be well served to be a part of a Francophone network regionally, nationally and internationally. Given that French is an official language of Canada and there are many francophone residents, as well as students in French and French Immersion schools, having a connection to a larger network could be an advantage for all residents.

Both the Francophone Network in Quebec, as well as the FFS, speak of the possibilities of cross-cultural networking with the Metis community through this membership. As one example, Saskatoon could follow the lead of what is happening in Manitoba where a Metis

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organization in Winnipeg is working on a tourist route that follows the legacy of Louis Riel, a francophone Métis leader, for Manitoba and Western Canada.

IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as membership in the network is free.

Pending direction of City Council, Administration will then determine which Division will take the lead to manage the membership and maintain the relationship with both FFS and FFCANA.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will work with the partners listed above to begin the application process upon approval.

APPENDICES

1. Francophone and Francophile Network Strategic Plan 2019-2022

REPORT APPROVAL

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