SUBJECT: 2007 Green Venture Base Funding & Authority to Enter into Agreements (PED07081) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the City renew its agreement to provide base funding for Hamilton-Wentworth Green Venture Incorporated (Green Venture) in the amount of $40,000 per year, for the 2007 Budget year, as per the letter of request attached as Appendix A to Report PED07081.

(b) That Planning and Economic Development Department staff be authorized and directed to enter into agreements with Hamilton-Wentworth Green Venture Incorporated (Green Venture), to deliver projects as outlined in individual project agreements, with each project agreement not to exceed $15,000, and with the total value of the agreements not to exceed the funding approved in the annual budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

For the past 10 years the former Region and the City have enabled delivery of many environmental projects that benefit Hamiltonians by providing funding to Hamilton-Wentworth Green Venture (Green Venture), a registered non-profit organization. This funding is approved through the annual budget process. Green Venture, in turn, obtains additional funding from other agencies and levels of government to efficiently deliver projects in areas of energy conservation, wise water use, greenhouse gas emission
reduction, air quality improvements, waste reduction, toxics elimination and alternative transportation. The City’s purchasing procedure requires staff to seek Council’s authority to continue to enter into these long-standing agreements.

**BACKGROUND:**

Green Venture has submitted a proposal to the City’s Long Range Planning Division of the Planning and Development Department to renew its base funding of $40,000 per year.

In 1993, the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth initiated work to develop a non-profit organization to bring together public and private partners to advance environmental protection and improvement in the community. The Region recognized that there was a benefit to having an action-oriented, customer focused, community-based, non-profit organization to implement environmental programs in the community.

A partnership was formed in 1994 between the Region, the Province of Ontario, utilities, private sector environmental companies and community organizations. This organization has become a successful, community-based service delivery option for the furthering of the City’s environmental policy objectives.

The City has contributed $40,000 per year to Green Venture as base funding to partially cover the cost of community services, overhead and fund-raising for environmental projects since 1995. This funding has been used to leverage funds from other organizations such as Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Horizon Utilities, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. In 2005/2006, Green Venture used its base funding to leverage $569,000 from these agencies and from individuals.

Green Venture partners with a number of City Departments and with organizations such as Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association (HIEA), Connon Nurseries, Hamilton Utilities Corporation, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and Clean Air Hamilton on programs such as Native Species Tree Planting (1999-2004), Composting Promotion (1995-2004), Commuter Challenge (2000-2006), Wise Water Use (2000-2004), and EcoHouse (2002-2006).

Green Venture also plays an active role in a number of local initiatives, as follows:

- Vision 2020 and GRIDS processes in the City;
- Clean Air Hamilton;
- Development of the City’s Waste Management Plan;
- Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC); and,
- the development of the Hamilton and Area Eco-Network.
ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Council has the option of withdrawing base-funding to Green Venture. In doing this, the City would lose the environmental program funding leveraged by the base funding. Council would also be perceived as not supporting environmental programs in the community.

The City’s Purchasing Policy now makes it necessary to seek Council’s authorization to enter into all agreements. The City has been partnering with Green Venture for many years and Green Venture has demonstrated the ability to consistently deliver quality programming that meets the goals of Vision 2020 and Council’s Strategic Plan. Staff is recommending that Council authorize the Planning and Economic Development Department to enter into agreements with Green Venture, utilizing funds that are approved during the annual budget process (i.e. no new funds are being requested).

The amount of each of the projects will not exceed $15,000, except as expressly approved by Council. The total value of the individual Green Venture project agreements for 2005 was $40,000 and $47,000 in 2004. In 2006, anticipated projects totaled $24,000 for EnerGuide for Homes, Education for Elementary Students and the Commuter Challenge. In addition Green Venture delivered the Anti-Idling Awareness Campaign ($40,000) in 2006.

As partnership opportunities arise, additional projects are added to Green Venture’s list throughout the year with the total value of the City’s contributions for 2006 being limited by the funds available through Council’s budget process. For this reason, we are not attributing an exact dollar value for the project agreements in any given year.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Council has the option of withdrawing base funding to Green Venture. In doing this, the City would lose the environmental program funding leveraged by the base funding.

Council may chose to provide funding to another environmental agent to deliver environmental programs. However, few delivery agents have the experience, knowledge and partnership resources of Green Venture that could mobilize and leverage further funding to continue current environmental programs and initiate new environmental programs in the City.

Council has the option of requiring staff to issue a Request For Proposals for all projects over $5,000 as is the Corporate Policy for recruiting “consultants”. This option would entail many hours of staff time in an administrative process that will not produce a better result for the City in Green Venture projects that typically entail joint contributions from many other organizations. It should be noted that partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) does not have the same function as hiring consultants. NGO partnerships help to build community capacity to identify and solve problems, as well as leverage the City’s financial investment with funds from other agencies and levels of government.
Authorizing staff to enter into agreements with Green Venture is a form of “single sourcing”. However, in terms of fairness, any NGO can come forward to the City with a proposal for a possible partnership. A similar authority to enter into an agreement with that organization can be brought forward to Council at the time. In practice, the City has partnered with Green Venture, who recruits other organizations into the partnership to add value. An example of this was the recent Clean Air Hamilton Mobile Monitoring Study, where Green Venture assembled a funding and resource team that included Ministry of Environment, Clean Air Hamilton and the City of Hamilton. This is a very efficient and effective use of limited staff resources, and reduces the amount of time required to initiate projects.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial - Continuing the base funding agreement with Green Venture will total $40,000 per year for 2007. There are no financial implications arising from Council's authorization to enter into the agreements with Green Venture as the funding involved is already included in the annual budget process.

Staffing - Approval of the recommendation will save staff time to concentrate on other program functions.

Legal - All agreements made with Green Venture are vetted through the City Solicitor.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

Not applicable.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

The City of Hamilton Finance and Purchasing Sections, Green Venture and Clean Air Hamilton have all been consulted. They have not expressed any concerns with the recommendation and their comments have been incorporated into the body of this report.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

The public are involved in the definition and development of local solutions. Partnerships are promoted. Partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations like Green Venture strengthen the ability to deliver quality programs to the citizens of Hamilton. A single drawback of this report would be that Council cannot authorize entering into agreements with all non-governmental organizations at this time,
as each opportunity must be explored and evaluated separately to ensure that the City is receiving value for money.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

The programs being run by Green Venture provide environmental and health benefits. Examples include projects that promote reduced energy consumption, educate elementary school children on environmental issues, and change behaviour towards more sustainable transportation choices for commuters.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Short-term economic well-being is enhanced by enabling Green Venture to leverage City funding with funding from other agencies. Long-term economic benefits can be realized by reducing the burden on the tax levy by leveraging these other sources of funding, and through the results of the projects themselves. The agreements with Green Venture will help to maintain Hamilton's high quality environmental amenities which in turn, can help attract and maintain a skilled workforce and attract investment to the City.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes ☐ No

The proposal for Council to authorize entering into project delivery agreements with Green Venture does create value across all three bottom lines, as noted above.

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Partnerships with external organizations enable staff to implement projects which benefit the community at a time when City budgets and staff levels are constrained. Having this ability empowers staff to feel like they are able to make progress.

BM:dkm
Attach. (1)
12/21/2006

Brian Montgomery
Planning and Development Department
Long Range Planning and Design Division
City of Hamilton
71 Main St. W. Hamilton, Ont. L8P 4Y5

Dear Brian

RE: Partnership between the City of Hamilton and Green Venture

I write to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of Hamilton-Wentworth Green Venture. In 1993 the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth initiated work to develop a non-profit organization to bring together public and private partners to advance environmental protection and improvement in the community. The Region recognized that there was a benefit to having an action-oriented, customer focussed, community-based, non-profit organization to implement environmental programs in the community.

A partnership was formed in 1994 between the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, the Province of Ontario, utilities, private sector environmental companies and community organizations. This organization has become a successful community-based service delivery option for the furthering of the City of Hamilton-Wentworth environmental policy objectives.

The City has contributed $40,000/year to partially cover the cost of community services, overhead and the cost of developing and securing funds for environmental projects. Continuing investment in maintaining the Green Venture infrastructure means that Green Venture can continue to develop partnerships and programs that benefit the Hamilton community.

This letter is a formal request for continued support. We would welcome an opportunity to speak to you and to answer any of your questions. Should you wish further clarification regarding the work of Green Venture please contact me, at 540-8787 ext. 15.

Yours very sincerely,

Heather Donison
Executive Director
Green Venture
Green Venture: Turning Vision 2020 into Reality

Background

Since inception Green Venture has worked with City staff to meet government objectives and deliver programs that support action by citizens to improve the local environment and economy.

Green Venture grew out of a partnership formed in 1994 between the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, the province of Ontario, utilities, private sector environmental companies and community organizations. It was incorporated as a non-profit organization in March 1995. Green Venture has continually worked with the Region/City to improve the local environment and economy by affecting changes in citizen behaviour and encouraging sustainable development.

Mission Statement

*Green Venture is a non-profit organization promoting energy efficiency, pollution prevention and conservation, thereby improving the quality of life in our community.*

Green Venture is results oriented. We help people to save energy and water, reduce waste, avoid toxic chemicals, etc. through changing behaviour and using green products and services.

Green Venture benefits the economy and the environment by:

- creating jobs and business opportunities
- boosting Ontario’s green industry
- saving money for homes and businesses
- deferring and reducing costly infrastructure investments by governments and utilities
- conserving natural resources
- protecting and enhancing the environment

Green Venture is built on community partnerships, involvement, and support. We are locally planned and managed to address local needs and opportunities. Green Venture has its own local board of directors and professional staff.

A volunteer community Board of Directors manages Green Venture, which brings expertise from various sectors of our community. Green Venture relies on a flexible workforce and many volunteers. Volunteers provide time and expertise in diverse areas including marketing, natural gardening, database management and computer systems. Many of these volunteers are new
Canadians or students benefiting from the opportunity for meaningful experience in a workplace setting.

Environmental Programs

Green Venture’s primary partner is the City of Hamilton. Green Venture provides a “one-stop shop” for local environmental and conservation information for the public through EcoHouse, home visits, phone inquiries, web page, public speaking, special events and seasonal newsletter. Green Venture community services include:

- distribution of information, by knowledgeable staff and volunteers, to citizens who visit Green Venture’s EcoHouse
- detailed, customized, advice for homeowners on energy conservation, wise water use, greenhouse gas emission reduction, waste reduction, toxics elimination and alternative transportation
- publication/distribution of Green Venture’s phone number as the one-stop source for information relating to environmental information (e.g. household hazardous waste, blue box, etc.)
- an information booth at community events where knowledgeable Green Venture staff and volunteers distribute information
- co-ordination of community wide alternative transportation campaigns including the Commuter Challenge, Active and Safe Routes to Schools and the anti idling campaign
- special public workshops or talks on such topics as: composting, waste reduction, toxic chemical reduction, climate change, energy savings and reduction of CO₂ emissions, alternatives to pesticides and alternative transportation

Green Venture has partnered with the City in a number of specific projects and programs to further municipal policy objectives. Some of the recent or on-going projects/programs are described in the following paragraphs. A complete list of current programs and activities is included in the 2006 2007 Business Plan.

Native Species Tree Planting (1999-): Residents of Hamilton-Wentworth are able to purchase up to two subsidized trees from Green Venture to improve local air quality and prevent climate change. Residents also learn about other ways to improve local air quality. The City of Hamilton-Wentworth and the Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association (HIEA) subsidize trees. Partners: City of Hamilton, HIEA, and Connon Nurseries. Participation to date: 2000 trees
Composting Promotion (1995-): Backyard composters are available at the Green Venture office, and at special community events. Composters facilitate backyard composting and reduce the costs of waste handling and disposal. Green Venture staff offer advice to residents to help them compost effectively and solve any problems they may encounter. Green Venture also supplies worms and instructions for vermicomposting. Partners: the City of Hamilton Cost: $29.99 for composters; $20.00 for red-wiggler worms. Composters distributed to date: 3600

The Commuter Challenge (2000-): To help improve local air quality and support improved transportation options, Green Venture organizes the annual Commuter Challenge. Citizens and organizations are challenged to commute by any means other than a single-occupancy vehicle. Workplaces compete for the highest rate of participation. Days of the week are themed according to different forms of transportation (e.g. “Totally Transit Day”) and coinciding community events recognize commuter efforts, raise public awareness and attract media attention. Partners: City of Hamilton, Clean Air Hamilton, Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association and many others.

Wise Water Use (2000-).

Coinciding with Hamilton's universal water metering program, the Wise Water Use campaign builds public awareness of wise water use and its techniques. The project uses a number of methods that inform the public regarding efficient water use alternatives and water services. The program also provides water customers with support to assist with the adjustment to metered water (installation of water meter) and to provide access to wise water use (conservation) information and products. The Wise Water use program facilitates and promotes awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of water resources through the development and delivery of curriculum linked education programs and adult workshops. Partners: City of Hamilton.

EcoHouse (2002-)

An ecology and heritage centre designed, leased, and operated by Green Venture. In addition to being Green Venture’s home office, EcoHouse serves to demonstrate environmental technologies from the past, present and future. It shows citizens that it is possible to live in a sustainable manner, in harmony with our environment. Citizens can view and use environmentally friendly products, and discover where they can be purchased.

Partners: City of Hamilton, Hamilton Utilities Corporation, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Naturally Hamilton (2005-)
Naturally Hamilton is an education program that developed out of a partnership between the City of Hamilton and Green Venture with the following goal: To provide the citizens of Hamilton with information and resources that will help them to reduce or eliminate pesticide use for cosmetic purposes on their lawns and gardens. This program is guided by the Precautionary Principal that states, “Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty will not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”

Partners: *City of Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens, and many landscapers and retailers*

Green Venture also plays a role in many local initiatives aimed at improving or protecting the local environment. These include:

- **Vision 2020**: Hamilton’s long term vision of a vibrant, healthy, sustainable future shared by local government, citizens, businesses, groups and organizations. Green Venture’s role is turning the VISION into a reality by helping individual citizens take action in their everyday life. We form partnerships, work cooperatively and innovate to achieve these goals.

- **Clean Air Hamilton**: The Clean Air Hamilton is an alliance of government (municipal, provincial and federal) industry, ENGOs, and citizens to facilitate efforts to improve air quality in the Hamilton area and to document the impact of those efforts. In partnership with Clean Air Hamilton Green Venture implements programs to help individuals take action to improve Hamilton’s air quality. We promote the success that Clean Air Hamilton partners are having in improving local air quality.

- **Waste Management Master Plan for the City of Hamilton**: The Waste management plan defines how waste is managed in the future City of Hamilton. Green Venture took an active role in the development of the Waste Management Master Plan through the Citizens Advisory Panel and is providing programs that will help citizens adapt to improvements in the City’s Waste Management operations.


- **Hamilton and Area Eco-Network**: Green Venture has taken a leadership role in the development of the Hamilton and Area Eco-network. The EcoNet provides opportunity for partnership development, volunteer and staff training, sharing of resources and networking for Hamilton environmental organizations.

**Financial Implications**
Green Venture’s 2005/2006 budget was $569,000. The revenue for this budget has come from a variety of sources including Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation Horizon Utilities and service and product sales. The revenue from these programs generally covers the incremental cost of performing these projects but do not contribute to the cost of overhead or to the cost of developing and securing these projects. **The City has contributed $40,000/year to partially cover the cost of community services, overhead and the cost of developing and securing funds for environmental projects.** Continuing investment in maintaining the Green Venture infrastructure means that Green Venture can continue to develop partnerships and programs that benefit the Hamilton community.