



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: Patti Funaro, Director of Culture and Recreation

Department: Culture and Recreation

Date of Report: March 28, 2022

Report Number: CR-2022-09

Subject: Festival and Event Hosting

Recommendation

That the report of the Director of Culture and Recreation (CR-2022-09) dated March 28, 2022 regarding the plan to manage festivals and events be received; and that the Event Hosting Policy be approved; and further that the Event Rental Fees be approved and finally that the permanent full-time position of Recreation Programmer – Events be approved.

Report

Since the opening of the Vollmer Complex in 2008, the number of festivals and events hosted within the Town of LaSalle has grown substantially. On average, there are more than forty significant or major annual event rentals. This includes events such as charity walks, sporting events and children's events to name a few. In addition, Town staff plans and organizes more than ten annual events, along with two major festivals. This is in addition to rentals of parks and facilities for family events, birthday parties and showers etc.

To continue to attract, promote and support events, and in preparation for the opening of the Petite Cote Waterfront Event Centre, it is necessary to outline a plan for the next three to five years.

In 2021, a comprehensive review of all third party led events was completed. The following data was reviewed:

- Event type
- Event date(s)

- Event space required
- Pre-event meetings and contact required
- Scale of set up requests
- Additional resources required from the town
- Event attendance and impact of the event (parking, other activities, noise etc.)

From this data, several common themes/trends were identified and considered when developing this plan:

- There is a lack of variety in the types of third-party hosted events. Most are focused on sport and physical activity and there are often charity walk/runs on back-to-back weekends
- Event organizers have many unique requests/special circumstances and set up requirements. This often causes confusion for staff during set up and requires additional time often consulting with various departments and event organizers which may result in additional costs to the Town
- There are often multiple events at multiple locations on the same day or weekend which can disrupt our regular facility users and may require staff overtime to support
- The cost to the municipality to rent event hosting space exceeds the revenue generated
- New events continue to be added to the annual roster, without additional staff to support them
- Event organizers require a significant time commitment from multiple town staff in the preparation and delivery of events (Appendix A).

In addition, the following was identified to consider when determining action steps:

- The town should ensure a balance of activities are offered at the new Event Centre that meet the needs of various demographics. The best way to do this is through an Expression of Interest process
- Through consultation with industry experts, it was determined that the event centre should have the basic amenities to host a variety of different events, and organizers would be required to rent what is necessary (EG – staging, tables/chairs, pipe and drape etc.)
- The closure of event space during the pandemic has afforded us the opportunity to update our event hosting practices, pricing and amenities prior to reopening
- The area around the Event Centre will be under construction for the next few years and will affect the types of events that can be hosted.

This plan focuses on three identified goals:

1. Set and communicate clear priorities to event organizers

- The Event Hosting Policy (Appendix B) will provide a clear explanation of how events are delivered and supported by the Town and clarify the roles and responsibilities of event organizers, including adhering to all regulations, by-laws and procedures. All Town departments including police and fire along with the Town's insurer had the opportunity to review and provide input on this detailed and comprehensive policy.
- The Policy of Waiving or Reducing Fees related to the Use of Town-Owned Facilities and Spaces will support the consistent practice of waiving or reducing fees in exceptional circumstances only. Charging all fees associated with a rental will minimize operational costs being funded from the tax base. The policy and practice will be shared with event organizers in an effort to reduce the number of requests made to Council.
- The "Expression of Interest" (Appendix C) practice will determine the level of interest from the community in hosting events in the Town of LaSalle and will help to ensure a diverse year-round calendar of events for the community.

2. Coordinate internal resources and ensure fiscal responsibility:

- Improve the internal coordination in the delivery of Town services for events:
 - Ensure an appropriate staffing structure to improve and maintain services and mitigate risk
 - Temporarily assign supervisory responsibility for events held at the Petite Cote Waterfront Centre to the Supervisor of Recreation (Public Works will manage the physical facility and maintenance). It is anticipated that further position(s), yet to be determined, will be added as the waterfront project develops and further amenities become operational.
 - Add a new full-time Recreation Programmer position to the Culture and Recreation department. This position will assist with coordinating various internal and external resources for the successful delivery of events on Town property. The information outlined in Appendix A along with the Event Hosting Policy identifies the high level of coordination required to mitigate risk for the Town. This level of responsibility warrants the support of a full-time position dedicated to event hosting. (Appendix D – Recreation Programmer, Events Draft Position Description)
 - Regular meetings of the Special Event Review Team (SERT)
The Special Event Review Team (SERT) provides knowledge and guidance to event organizers in the Town of LaSalle so that events on Town property or under Town Liability are executed safely and successfully by the organizer. The SERT initiative aims to streamline special event applications and the town approval process for event

organizers, while enhancing the coordination of municipal services. The Special Event Review Team (SERT) is comprised of members of administration who bring subject matter expertise, knowledge, and experience to event organizers. In addition, guests from external organizations will be invited to attend meetings as necessary to provide additional subject matter expertise, knowledge, guidance and relevant information beyond the scope of committee members (eg. Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit).

- Digitize services where possible to provide greater convenience to event organizers, be more efficient with staff time and allow for safer and more secure record keeping.
- Reduce expenses and the demand on town resources by eliminating special requests and services. This will be identified and communicated through the Event Hosting Policy. The development of an “Approved Contractor” list will ensure that all necessary documentation (EG Certificate of Insurance, licensing etc.) is on file with the Town and will provide event organizers with options to obtain services not provided directly by the Town.
- Institute new fees based on actual costs (Appendix E)
- Adhere to the fee waiving policy on a consistent basis to ensure that any costs incurred to host the event are recovered
- Hire an additional full-time Culture and Recreation employee to support the increasing number of events, including at the new event centre. This will ensure exceptional customer service while balancing the workload for current employees

3. Create awareness and exposure for the Petite Cote Waterfront Event Centre

- Focus on Town of LaSalle organized events in 2022 that require minimal staff time to bring the public to the event centre
 - Based on data obtained through the public engagement process, Markets, live music and food trucks were the top three requested events
 - Provide contingency for construction delays and time to ensure that all mechanical systems are operating as expected.

- Expand upon existing successful event base to reduce the impacts on the current staff compliment until additional position(s) are approved and in place
 - Relocate Town of LaSalle signature events (EG -Last Call Before Fall, Truck or Treat, Santa Breakfast) to the event centre
- Host networking events and capacity building events for third party event organizers

Upon approval of the recommendations in this report, administration will move forward with next steps:

- Implementing the Event Hosting Policy effective immediately
- Implementing new fees
- Recruiting and hiring a Recreation Programmer (timeline TBD)
- Begin planning for Town of LaSalle organized events at the new event centre
- Execute the Expression of Interest process for 2023 events (June – note the first EOI will included events for all of 2023. Subsequent EOI's will follow the schedule outlined in Appendix C)

Consultations

CAO, Deputy CAO

Council Services, Fire, Police, Public Works, Strategy and Engagement, Finance,

Financial Implications

The estimated annual cost (including wages and benefits) for the new recreation programmer - events position is \$100,000, which will be funded from the small cost waterfront funding build-up as this new position primarily relates to the new event centre. The purpose of the waterfront build-up is to fund both the annual debt payments related to capital expenditures at the waterfront and future operating costs related to the waterfront, which includes the operating costs of the new event centre.

The current budget for the annual waterfront allocation is:

Small Coast Waterfront Annual Budget Allocation

	Amount
2022 Small cost waterfront annual budget allocation	\$960,000

2022 Reallocation for annual debenture payments (\$7 million issued in February)	(\$474,000)
2022 Current small coast waterfront funding currently available	\$486,000
Reallocation for recreation programmer - events	(\$100,000)
2022 Remaining small coast waterfront annual budget allocation	\$386,000

This waterfront funding allocation will continue to be built-up year-over-year as the Town continues to roll out the various initiatives included in the small coast waterfront master plan.

Prepared By:



Director of Culture & Recreation

Patti Funaro

Link to Strategic Goals

1. Enhancing organizational excellence - Yes
2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - Yes
3. Grow and diversify the local economy - No
4. Build on our high-quality of life - Yes
5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Yes

Communications

n/a

Notifications

n/a