

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Heather Gillis, Events Assistant
Meeting Date: April 21, 2021
Report Code: CS-21-038
Subject: 2021 Summer Events

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-21-038 respecting 2021 Summer Events, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Approve the events for the 2021 summer events season as detailed in report CS-21-038; and
2. Approve the cancellation of Harbourfest due to gathering limits and restrictions.

Highlights:

- The recommendations contained in this report are based on the assumption that similar restrictions to events and public gatherings will be much the same in summer 2021 as they were in 2020.
- Harbour Nights and Music at the Market return this summer, operating under Provincial guidelines.
- Staff has outlined a new, safe way to celebrate Canada Day as a community, including a live-streamed concert and fireworks.
- It is recommended that Harbourfest not move forward for 2021 due to anticipated Provincial gathering restrictions.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

3.1 – Promote Owen Sound as Where You Want to Live

3.3 – Enhance tourism opportunities for active and passive year-round enjoyment

7.1 – Continue to deliver select free City events to residents

Background:

On March 1, 2021, Grey-Bruce entered the Green stage of the colour-coded [COVID-19 response framework](#). The Green stage allows for up to 100 people at outdoor public events in staffed businesses and outdoor facilities. On April 7, 2021, the Province announced a 4-week [State of Emergency](#), including a stay-at-home order, placing a number of restrictions on public gathering limits. Staff are optimistic that following the 4-week period, gathering limits will increase as the vaccine becomes more readily available. Large events require months of advance planning, including deposits on equipment and talent. With no indication of when or if gathering restrictions may change, staff has taken an approach to planning events, assuming restrictions in June of 2021 will be similar to 2020 late summer.

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Provide an outline of the City's summer events, approved by Council through the 2021 operating budget.
2. Outline how events are adapting to the anticipated restrictions of COVID-19.
3. Provide a recommendation with respect to Harbourfest 2021.

Analysis:

The City events outlined below were approved through the 2021 operating budget. The purpose of the report is to highlight necessary changes and alterations due to Provincial gathering restrictions. The information outlined in this report is based on the assumption that Provincial gathering restrictions in 2021 will mirror the restrictions in 2020, meaning that groups of 100 may gather outdoors provided they adhere to the Provincial guidelines. Staff will work with Public Health to ensure all events are carried out within the Provincial guidelines.

TD Harbour Nights

Concerts will take place on Sunday evenings beginning on June 20 and running until August 15. Concerts will be held at 7 p.m. and will return to the original site at the [Owen Sound Visitor Centre](#). Visitor services are planned

for 2021 to be delivered at the Visitor Centre. The City issued a Call for Performers on February 2, 2021, and procurement of talent is currently taking place.

Budget & Sponsorship

TD has committed \$3,000 to be the title sponsor of the event. Staff has contacted local businesses that have sponsored individual concerts in the past and the goal is to have each of the nine concerts individually sponsored for \$500 each. In past years, donations have been collected from the audience as a way to offset event costs. It is recommended that due to physical distancing requirements and hygiene, cash donations not be accepted for 2021. This change represents \$3,000 in lost revenue.

Music at the Market

In 2020, the City was the recipient of a \$150,000 grant from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO). This grant was used for a number of tourism-related initiatives, including a lunchtime concert series at the Farmers' Market. These concerts were incredibly well-received, reaching the 100-person limit for almost every date. Due to layoffs in 2020, the County of Grey provided lead staffing to assist in the planning and execution of the event. City staff will assume the planning and execution role in 2021.

Concerts are proposed for Thursday and Friday afternoons in July and August from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. at the Farmers' Market square. Staff will once again work with local restaurants to partner on the promotion of lunch specials to be advertised on the Music at the Market website for takeout.

Budget & Sponsorship

Music at the Market was approved in the operating budget for 2021.

Canada Day

For 2021, it is unlikely that gathering limits will increase to allow a Canada Day event like Owen Sound residents have grown to know and love, with thousands of people gathering at Kelso Beach for entertainment, activities, and food vendors. Staff is working to plan a virtual Canada Day celebration streamed live in-studio at CTRE productions including performers, interviews, and children's activities, as well as a fireworks show over the water. The show will be filmed by CTRE Productions and will be streamed through their online platform, as well as Youtube and the City's social media channels simultaneously.

The virtual show will feature four acts who perform live in-studio on July 1. Two of those acts will be children's performers such as a magician, or dance instructor, and two will be local musical acts. The full show will be available on the City's website and social media following the live stream so people can re-watch.

Finally, the day will be capped off with a firework show over the Harbour. Fireworks will be launched from the pier beside the grain elevators, allowing for many vantage points along the Harbour wall, as well as in the water from boats. Similar to Owen Sound Celebrates, to encourage physical distancing, staff will release a list of locations where people can safely watch the fireworks from their vehicles, including the Harry Lumley Bayshore (north and south parking lots). The fireworks show will also be streamed live online by CTRE to their platform and the City's social media channels. The live stream of Owen Sound Celebrates fireworks on Facebook has nearly 8,000 views to date.

Budget & Sponsorship

Staff has applied for the Celebrate Canada grant for \$10,000 to support the event. Staff generally receives communication in mid-April as to whether or not the application was successful.

In addition to the Celebrate Canada grant if successful, several local businesses have supported Owen Sound's Canada Day celebrations for years, many of whom have committed to sponsoring the event again in 2021. Staff is continuing to reach out to local businesses for sponsorship support.

In the approved budget, \$3,500 was noted as vendor registration revenue. Given the new structure of the event, with participants being required to remain inside their vehicles for the fireworks, vendors will not be permitted to participate. To help offset costs, staff is recommending that \$3,500 be taken from the Harbourfest budget and be used towards Canada Day.

Based on the cost of service for CTRE being below \$10,000, the City's purchasing by-law enables staff to select a service provider.

Outdoor Movie Nights

Outdoor Movie Nights traditionally take place on three Thursdays in August at different locations around Owen Sound. In 2020, due to uncertain gathering restrictions, Council approved staff to move forward with two drive-in movie nights at the Harry Lumley Bayshore parking lot. For 2021, staff is proposing that Outdoor Movie Nights move back towards a more

traditional format, keeping in mind Provincial gathering limits. Outdoor Movie Nights would take place on August 12, 19, and 26 in the Farmers' Market Square. Moving the event to the Farmers' Market allows for a more central location for accessibility, washrooms on site, and shelter for equipment if the weather is poor. In past locations, movies have had to be moved indoors due to wind affecting the large blow-up screen. Moving to this location and using a smaller screen will decrease the chance of cancellation, as moving indoors will not be an option with gathering restrictions. The location also brings activation to the Downtown River Precinct as was envisioned.

Budget & Sponsorship

The budgeted cost of providing Outdoor Movie Nights is \$10,200.

Harbourfest

Harbourfest is a licensed event that typically takes place on the second weekend of July at the City's inner-east Harbour. The event features local brewers, wineries, and cideries, as well as a day full of entertainment and activities. In 2020, due to public gathering restrictions, Harbourfest was cancelled. While the hope was that the event would be able to continue in 2021, it is anticipated that gathering limits will still prohibit events of this size.

Planning for an event of this size requires a large lead time, and most contractors and performers require booking deposits. If staff move forward with planning the event, in the hopes that restrictions ease, it would cost approximately \$10,000 in deposits and booking fees. Given the advance timeline needed to plan and execute an event this size, and the financial commitment required to book entertainment and contractors, it is recommended that the 2021 Harbourfest not move forward.

Budget & Sponsorship

The cancellation of Harbourfest 2021 will see \$13,500 remain in the 2021 Operating Budget. These funds will be helpful in offsetting the loss of revenue normally associated with the Home and Cottage Expo Event.,

10th Street Bridge Dedication

Dedication of the 10th Street Bridge to be renamed Giche-name-wiikwedong is scheduled to take place on June 21, Indigenous People's Day. Event staff will assist the Engineering Department and Public Works in the planning and

execution of this event, including logistical support, booking of entertainment, and marketing support.

Financial Implications:

TD Harbour Nights - \$1,500 net cost

Music at the Market - \$40,000 net cost

Canada Day - \$12,850 net cost

Outdoor Movie Nights - \$10,200 net cost

Harbourfest - \$13,500 to remain in 2021 Operating Budget

Events will continue according to the budgets outlined in the operating budget, except Harbourfest which upon cancellation will see \$13,500 remain in the 2021 Operating Budget. These funds will be helpful in offsetting the loss of revenue normally associated with the Home and Cottage Expo Event.

Consultation:

Manager of Community Development and Marketing

Manager of Purchasing, Risk and Asset Management

CTRE Productions

Attachments:

None.

Recommended by:

Heather Gillis, Events Assistant

Reviewed by:

Brent Fisher, Manager of Community Development and Marketing

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Heather Gillis, Events Assistant at hgillis@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1237.