

Committee of the Whole, July 9, 2018

COW-10-18

Hello Suzanne,

Thank you for helping me understand the process of the Committee of the Whole meetings. I admit it is not something that I'm familiar with.

I'm writing in reference to:

Correspondence from Burlington Downtown Business Association
regarding the Santa 5k road race (COW-10-18)

If you could distribute this to those involved in the meeting I would really appreciate it.

I've read with some interest the memorandum that Brian Dean has written on behalf of the Burlington Downtown Business Association. I appreciate his concerns, and that of the other business owners that are represented by the organization. Any event that impacts the viability of their businesses is a concern, and they should express their opinions so that Council can make an informed decision.

There are some parts of the letter that concern me. Unfortunately due to other work commitments that I've had since reading the letter, I haven't had the time to contact Mr. Dean directly to seek clarification on a number of issues.

I am concerned about this quote that is included in his memorandum: "WAY TOO CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS!!! NO to Saturday! Get it off Brant St. This is very unfair to our customers. Saturday is our busiest day of the week. No one can pick up orders nor find parking."

The proposed motion that Mr. Dean has put forward is to move the date to another Saturday. If Council were to follow the advice of this business owner, the only other option for the Santa 5K would be on a Sunday. That would impact my business. Churches traditionally receive double their monthly income in December than any other month. While the timing of the race impacts an hour or so of the time that most businesses would be open, it would impact almost all of the operating day of a church. I'm not trying to minimize the impact that an hour or two would have on a business. I am trying to point out that for a church, the impact could be more significant.

Just like the need for businesses to balance their books by the end of the year, so do churches. With losses of income just before the end of the year, the health of churches would be impacted. Our ability to then provide the services to the community of Burlington would be strained.

I can't speak for other churches, however Holy Cross is busy six days a week hosting community groups. The only day and evening that we don't have a community based group in, is on Sundays – only because none have asked. During the summer, our facility is used on Sundays by those who have their community garden plots here.

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I've looked at the race course for the Santa 5K. I know that our attendance will be impacted if the race is run on a Sunday. If our attendance is impacted, then so is our income. I am unable to attend today's meeting, however if Council were to consider this motion, I would like the opportunity to speak to it.

I also looked at VRPro's website for more information about the race. I see that they have a race already scheduled for the day after Mr. Dean proposes to change the race to. Having seen some of the planning and preparation that goes into a race (City Councillors might remember that Holy Cross is active in supporting the Chilly Half Marathon that impacts our attendance – and income – greatly each year) I would doubt that VRPro could pull off two races on two successive days in two different cities.

I'm sure that cancelling either race would put a strain on VRPro's business. This would impact the good work that they are able to do in increasing tourism in our city, not to mention the funds they could donate to support our local hospital (as they have done for many years.)

In conclusion, I think this matter is more complicated than just the information Mr. Dean has presented. I hope that no action is taken on his proposed motion at this time.

Peace & Blessings,

Colin+
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