



**SUBJECT: Burlassic Park – Raptors viewing party**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Parks & Recreation Department**

Report Number: PR-04-19

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 965-01

Date to Committee: September 9, 2019

Date to Council: September 23, 2019

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file parks and recreation department report PR-04-19 regarding the Burlassic Park – Raptors viewing party.

### **Purpose:**

An Engaging City

- Community Building through Arts and Culture via Community Activities

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### **Background and Discussion:**

On May 25, 2019 the Toronto Raptors won the National Basketball Association's Eastern Division Title and made it into the National Basketball Association (NBA) Championships for the first time in the team's 24-year history. The community energy around the team was extremely high across the Country. Understanding a few municipalities were contemplating hosting community viewing parties of the NBA Championship games, similar to Jurassic Park in Toronto, Councillor Nisan presented a staff direction at Council on May 27, 2019:

Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation to organize a community event to broadcast the Raptors game(s), and report back to council on the final costs and finalization of logistical details, and cost to be drawn from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund.

## **Strategy/process**

With the experience of having recently hosted Rogers Hometown Hockey and the Walk Off the Earth Beard Guy Tribute, a staff team was quickly pulled together to determine the feasibility of organizing the first viewing party within four days. After obtaining the viewing rights from Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment (legal), the process to sole source production (procurement) was implemented.

Staff from Corporate Communications, Clerks, Roads Parks & Forestry (RPF), Transportation, Transit, Planning and Building, Fire and Parks and Recreation were all involved in bringing this event together. All staff involved with supporting the viewing of the championship games deferred existing workplan items or worked overtime to make these events happen.

In addition, support from Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS), St. John's Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services were also actively involved in the planning process.

There were several challenges that staff faced while planning and executing this event:

1. There was planned work to be done on the roof of City Hall which required a crane to occupy Civic Square, which could not be deferred. (Capital Works)
2. Canada Post distribution timelines could not be met in order to provide resident notification which required the use of a private distribution company to complete this requirement.
3. The Sound of Music (SOM) Festival would be starting their own set up during the game series, therefore their volunteers and staff would be focused on their own event. This meant that City Staff would have to assume the leadership role of organizing and executing the event, unlike the Beard Guy Tribute where SOM took the lead.

These challenges were met with 6 successful viewing events hosted in the city.

Table 1 below summarizes when and where each of the 6 viewing events were held.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Estimated Attendance</b>
May 30	Civic Square	2,000+
June 2	Civic Square	2,000
June 5	Central Park	200
June 7	Central Park	2,000
June 10	Civic Square	2,000+
June 13	Spencer Smith	4,500

## **Options considered**

Staff did consider hosting the event in alternative locations – moving everything to the Central Park Bandshell or Spencer Smith Park in order to provide one consistent venue. In the end both locations were used in addition to Civic Square.

Staff also thought about limiting the number of viewing parties to game 1 and elimination games. But given the success of game 1, and a crowd of over 2,000, staff kept the party going. The community was excited.

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## **Financial Matters:**

### **Total Financial Impact**

The total cost of the event was \$76,285.

This number is the total cost of hosting 6 viewing events and includes production – video wall, sound and cable hook ups, entertainment and animation. It also includes police services, overtime for Roads Parks & Forestry and Transit staff, signage, marketing and communications distribution, road closure equipment, transit shuttle service (game 4), washroom rentals and servicing.

### **Source of Funding**

Funding for the event came from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund.

### **Other Resource Impacts**

A larger staff team, including most corporate departments, was involved in these events. Given the existing workplans of staff, most staff involved had to work several overtime hours to be able to host the viewing parties and complete their workplan items.

Departments involved include:

City Manager's Office, Transportation, Transit, Fire, Capital Works, Legal, City Building, Clerks, Finance, Roads Parks & Forestry, and Parks and Recreation.

In addition, outside agencies and not for profits that supported include:

Halton Regional Police Services, Halton Emergency Management Services, St. John's Ambulance, and Sound of Music Festival (for game 6 viewing party).

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## **Connections:**

Hosting the viewing parties in the downtown supports the City's Downtown Core Commitments, where the downtown is deemed the Cultural Hub of the City and primary location for community events.

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## **Public Engagement Matters:**

Given the short turnaround time for public notification, staff were not able to use Canada Post to inform downtown residents of the upcoming event and Noise By-Law exemption. As a result, staff used social media, press releases and a private distribution company to circulate the notification to area residents.

Staff used the same communication strategy again after the decision was made to continue to host viewing parties, as games 3 and 4 viewing parties changed location to Central Park Bandshell.

Staff and members of Council did receive a few complaints from downtown residents about the viewing parties, but with an average of 2,000 people attending the viewing parties, peaking at over 4,000 on game 6, staff would suggest that the viewing parties were overall very well received by the community. In addition, the City of Burlington had countless "shout outs" during the national broadcast.

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## **Conclusion:**

Council's desire to host a community celebration of Canada's first team to be in the NBA Championship, resulted in a staff direction for staff to make the arrangements to host Burlassic Park. With staff's recent successes in hosting Roger's Hometown Hockey, and the Walk Off the Earth Beard Guy Tribute concert within the past seven months, staff were able to quickly bring a multi-department team together that put aside their existing workplan priorities to host these successful and iconic viewing events for the residents of Burlington.

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Respectfully submitted,

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**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.