



SUBJECT: Proposed Celebrate Burlington event
TO: Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.
FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-11-21

Wards Affected: all

File Numbers: 965-01

Date to Committee: July 8, 2021

Date to Council: July 13, 2021

Recommendation:

Authorize the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to re-purpose the budget that has previously been allocated for the Kite Festival, to support a new annual community event to be called, "Celebrate Burlington", as outlined in recreation, community and culture department report RCC-11-21.

PURPOSE:

Staff are seeking Council's approval to proceed with a new event called "Celebrate Burlington", as outlined in report RCC-11-21. Staff anticipate that this new event will be held over multiple days and attract over 1,000 people. A new event of this magnitude requires the approval of Council as it is beyond the delegated authority for approval by the Supervisor of Festival & Events.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

After coming out of a difficult past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Festivals & Events Team is recommending converting the former Kite Festival, typically held in June, to a celebration of all things Burlington. The new Celebrate Burlington concept is an opportunity to showcase all things local and inspire community activations across the city as well as recognize our togetherness.

In addition, April 10, 2022 marks the 100-year anniversary of the Cenotaph which was the result of a large community driven initiative to honour the resident veterans that fought in World War 1. The creation of the Cenotaph brought together service organizations, churches and residents to raise the funds and commission the works, a true community driven initiative. As this monument celebrates its 100th year, staff also see the parallel of community pride and honour coming together next spring, as we come out of the pandemic and think Celebrate Burlington on April 10, 2022 would be a great way to honour the past and celebrate current community resiliency through the pandemic. The focus of the event will be to profile local residents, businesses and organizations. The 2022 planned event timing and scope will be responsive to any pandemic restrictions that may still be in effect at that time.

Strategy/process

To create a new event and work within the current operating budget and staff resourcing; staff are proposing to re-purpose the funds used to host the annual Kite Festival to a new event called Celebrate Burlington. The Kite Festival is being recommended as staff have been investigating ways to re-model this event with a community development lens and spread it across the city vs. hosting it in a single park location. Unlike events that are tied specific to a single day celebration such as Canada Day, Santa Claus Parade or a target audience such as Children's Festival, the Kite Festival targets a similar audience as Children's Festival but on a smaller scale.

The goal of Celebrate Burlington is to celebrate local residents, businesses and organizations which make Burlington one of the best cities to live and raise a family in Canada.

Leveraging the "Together, We Are Burlington" concept that was launched earlier this Spring, staff look to incorporate the following aspects into Celebrate Burlington:

- An education component about the Cenotaph focusing on the passion and commitment of residents to create this long-standing monument.
- Bringing community spirit forward through smaller neighbourhood initiatives introduced through the Community Support Fund, or through community initiated Public Art or whatever the community feels is a good representation.
- Culminating in an event held the weekend of April 9 and 10, 2022 at Civic Square profiling local artist, residents, businesses and showcasing the Cenotaph.

After Spring 2022 staff recommend allowing for flexibility in the day(s) for the celebrations to allow for potential collaboration with other planned initiatives. Specific details for the activations are yet to be determined.

Options Considered

Staff consider asking for additional funding to support this new event and community project but felt that given the staff resourcing required and the timing of the proposed event for 2022 it would be better to allocate the existing resources for the Kite Festival to Celebrate Burlington.

Staff also considered a stand-alone event honouring the Cenotaph however, after learning about the history of the creation of the Cenotaph, staff felt that a similar community spirit was something that could be celebrated by residents today. Drawing on the inspiration of our past residents; to inspire residents today and draw out the community spirit that they have been longing for during the pandemic.

Financial Matters:

Festivals & Events typically budget \$15,000 in expenses for the Kite Festival and is proposing to use these funds toward the new event concept.

Total Financial Impact

Re-purposing of \$15,000

Source of Funding

Operating budget.

Other Resource Impacts

Events require support of many departments from within the corporation from Corporate Communications, Transportation, Roads, Parks and Forestry, Fire, Community Building and more. All these departments will be involved in a similar manner to how they were previously engaged as part of the Kite Festival.

Given the proposed education component link with the Cenotaph and the community engagement to encourage community driven initiatives staff anticipate that there may be a need for additional support from corporate communications or from an outside marketing agency to design and execute the marketing plan.

Climate Implications

Inclement weather is a factor that all event organizers face and strategies to deal with it will be addressed within the events Emergency Management Plan. This plan is reviewed by emergency service providers through the SET committee.

Staff will also operate a green event to reduce waste, recycling opportunities and select green initiatives including alternate transportation options, green food service supplies, etc.

Engagement Matters:

A group of passionate residents have met to discuss an event marking the 100-year anniversary of the Cenotaph and the concept of community spirit and celebration was also discussed and well received. The small group includes representatives from the Historical Society, The Heritage Advisory Committee, Freeman Station, the Burlington Legion and interested residents.

Staff look to further engage with Burlington Museums, the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown and Aldershot Business Improvement Areas and service clubs, in addition to tapping into the creativity of local residents and organizations.

Conclusion:

Over a 100 years ago the community came together after World War 1 to show their appreciation to our local veterans and created the Cenotaph. 100 years later, the community is coming out of a pandemic. Staff wish to draw upon Burlington spirit and pride and recommend the creation of a new event called “Celebrate Burlington” to take place in Spring 2022. This new event would be supported by using existing resources allocated from the Kite Festival.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Maxwell

Supervisor, Festivals & Events

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.