



COMMUNITY SERVICES *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: CS 2023-02

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sandy Jackson Director of Community Services

PREPARED BY: Manny O'Krafka, Manager Community Services
Cody Eby, Supervisor Parks and Facilities
Sandy Jackson, Director Community Services

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, CAO

DATE: March 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Special Event Process and Subsidies

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT staff be directed to grandfather facility use subsidies and in-kind staff costs for historical special events taking place at Township facilities for 2023 as outlined in Report CS 2023-02; and further,

THAT staff provide an update to Council prior to the 2024 special event season with detailed subsidy and in-kind staff costs related to 2023 events.

SUMMARY:

This report provides information regarding free and discounted use of Township facilities and in-kind staffing and other resources for the various special events that take place in the Township annually. As staff do not have the delegated authority to waive facility and staffing costs included in the Fees and Charges By-law, the report also seeks Council approval to grandfather historical events for 2023 and direction to summarize the discounts and free Township resources provided for these events and present them to Council prior to the 2024 special event season.

BACKGROUND:

The Township has a strong history of supporting special events and staff acknowledge and understand the importance of these events for enhancing resident's sense of community and providing social engagement opportunities. Special events not only provide for an enjoyable opportunity to interact with friends, neighbours, and visitors to our community, they often generate fundraising opportunities for event organizing groups.

During the pandemic, these events were not permitted to operate due to provincial legislation, and staff witnessed firsthand the excitement from organizing committees and community members at the gradual return of some of these events in 2022.

With the 2023 special event season approaching, staff are anticipating most historical events that took place in the township will return. Some of these annual events include the Mennonite Relief Sale, Victoria Day festivities and fireworks, Canada Day, Moparfest and Fall Fair to name a few. In 2022, when the Fall Fair returned after a two-year hiatus, they experienced a record-breaking 11,000 attendees, a strong indicator of how important these events are to our community.

Historically, there has been support from the Township for these events through varying levels of staff participation in some planning committees, providing in-kind staff and equipment resources, discounted or waived facility use, and /or direct financial compensation via sponsorships or the Municipal Grants program. These subsidies are currently estimated at \$26,000 per year, with approximately \$8,250 in in-kind staffing and the remainder in facility rental discounts and free uses. (see Appendix "A").

REPORT:

While staff fully support these important community events, staff does not have the delegated authority to waive costs outlined in the Fees and Charges Bylaw for the historical practice of providing free and discounted facility and parkland spaces, in-kind staff and other Township resources.

Staff are seeking Council authorization to continue to support these events through the same level of discounted access to facilities and staff support as per historical practice for the 2023 special event season.

In 2022, staff brought a number of reports to Council regarding special events and funded discounts and in-kind staff costs from the Council Special Event account. Although this practice offers a method to ensure the parks and facilities budget is fully compensated, it essentially moved the funds from one Township account to another and resulted in over-spending the Council special event budget. This recommendation would waive these costs for this season versus fund them from the Council budget.

New events not included in this report or offered by the Township will be required to pay the full cost of facility and park rentals as well as requested staffing costs. The events outlined in

this report, however, are long-standing major events and staff are recommending the same service level be provided for the coming year by waiving the same charges as outlined in Appendix “A”.

During and after each event, staff will seek input from event organizers regarding the level of support provided and the impacts on the event success, public engagement and overall participation.

Prior to the 2024 special event season, staff will report back to Council to provide updated subsidy information and results of event organizers and public consultation to ensure the process remains transparent. At that time Council may wish to consider some options for supporting these events, such as:

- referring groups to the Municipal Grants Program,
- increasing the Council Special Event budget to assist with offsetting event costs or
- developing special event fees and charges within the by-law and thereby authorizing staff to apply discount costs accordingly.

Appendix “A” lists the specific events and the discounts, in-kind and free uses staff are seeking permission to continue offering.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

- 1) **Quality of Life:** The Quality of Life goal and strategy of Accessibility and Inclusivity are intended to ensure all members of the community have fair and equal access to community events. This also addresses the strategy of Health and Wellbeing by providing leisure opportunities for all residents.
- 2) **Community Engagement:** The Community Engagement goal includes strategies for Belonging, Community Events and Support for Community Groups.
- 3) **Responsible Governance:** The goal of Responsible Governance includes strategies for Active Communications, Fiscal Responsibility, and Infrastructure Investments.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Attached as Appendix A is a summary of estimated facility rental and staffing/in-kind subsidies provided to some of the historical special events in Wilmot Township. Prior to the 2024 special event season, staff will prepare a similar in-depth summary of subsidized facility rental fees and staff resources for each event that takes place in 2023 and return to Council with this information. Based on the summary provided, Council can anticipate that approximately \$25,000 - \$30,000 worth of discounted fees, in-kind staff time and resources will be used to support these historical events.

Should consideration be given to referring groups to the Municipal Grant Program, it can be anticipated that additional funds will be required within this budget line to support all existing grant recipients, as well as these potential new special event requests. For reference the 2023 Municipal Grant Program, as endorsed by the Finance and Budget Committee, is valued at \$70,365.

Summary of 2022 Subsidized Staffing and Facility Use:

EVENT	ESTIMATED STAFFING COST	FACILITY RENTAL SUBSIDY	TOTAL SUBSIDY
New Hamburg Optimist Easter Egg Hunt	\$104.00	\$ 649.10	\$ 753.10
New Dundee Optimist Easter Egg Hunt	N/A	\$ 420.45	\$ 420.45
Mannheim Garage Sale	N/A	\$ 340.18	\$ 340.18
Victoria Day and Fireworks - New Dundee	N/A	\$ 2,061.28	\$ 2,061.28
Mennonite Relief Sale	\$1,302	\$ 619.46	\$ 1,921.46
Breakfast in the Park (Petersburg Optimist)	N/A	\$ 1,261.31	\$ 1,261.31
Canada Day	\$1,033.50	\$ 3,832.60	\$ 4,866.10
Moparfest	\$2,858.00	\$ 1,419.66	\$ 4,277.66
Fall Fair	\$2,953.00	\$ 7,373.28	\$ 10,326.28
New Hamburg Santa Clause Parade		\$ 216.35	\$ 216.35
Total	\$8,250.50	\$ 18,193.67	\$ 26,227.82

The events listed in the chart above will be the only ones considered for grandfathering for 2023.

ATTACHMENTS:

2022 Special Events - Historical Subsidized Use Staffing and Facility Use Costs