



## Community Services *Staff Report*

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REPORT NO: CS-2024-22

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Catania, Director, Community Services

PREPARED BY: Chris Catania, Director, Community Services  
Manuela O’Krafka, Manager of Community Services

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Options for Canada Day 2025

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive Report CS-2024-22 Canada Day Options 2025; and further,

THAT Council directs Staff to proceed with Option 1, as presented in Report CS-2024-22; and further,

THAT Council extend the 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force until Staff provide Council with a revised Terms of Reference for 2025.

### SUMMARY:

The Canada Day 2024 Celebrations were a great success thanks to the outstanding efforts of the 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force. This Report outlines options for Council to consider should they want to maintain the event as a Township run event.

### BACKGROUND:

In July 2023, Council passed a Motion that indicated:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of Wilmot directs staff to conduct outreach to local organizations, groups and stakeholders for offering the Canada Day activities as a Township operated special event, and report back to Council on the costs and anticipated budget implications, staff capacity and level of community interest in hosting such an event.

Upon initial outreach to local community groups and organizations, staff found that there was a great deal of interest from the community in having the event organized by community members and supported by the Township. This information was reported back to Council in response to the Notice of Motion in Report CS-2023-19.

In the report, staff also indicated that:

During the first year, staff anticipate that there will be more of a strain on staff resources as staff will play a larger role in the guidance and support of the event. A high level of communication will be expected between committee members and staff to ensure the event is a success.

#### REPORT:

The 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force was nominated by Council in December 2023, with the first meeting being held on January 23, 2024.

Prior to the formation of the Task Force, staff had already undertaken significant work towards the event such as completing and submitting the Celebrate Canada Grant application, securing bouncy castles, gaming trailer, entertainment such as Erick Traplin and the New Hamburg Concert Band, Canada Day supplies and taking the necessary steps to meet the procurement by-law for Fireworks.

Once the official meetings of the Task Force began, the group worked on securing additional food and entertainment vendors, sponsorships from the business community, marketing and promotions, planning family and children's activities, Sunrise Ceremony and inviting a wide variety of community groups, schools, youth groups and organizations from across the Township to join in the celebrations. It was decided in April that monthly meetings would not suffice as a result of the work to be done, and the meetings were increased to twice monthly.

Although the Task Force members had not previously worked together, the common goal of hosting a memorable event created a very positive working environment where strong working relationships were developed. The Task Force did a tremendous amount of work which resulted in a phenomenal free event that exceeded all expectations.

Additionally, the planning and execution of the event took significant staff time and resources which is not sustainable in the long term. Staff are outlining options for Council to consider should they want the Canada Day event to remain a Township event. It would be imperative to have a staff member as part of the organizing team as they would be in a position to mitigate

any risks on behalf of the Township by working with the Township Insurer to ensure that there is sufficient insurance in place from third party vendors, that the wording on any contracts entered into protects the Township, and that any legislative requirements are met, for example Public Health or Fire department requirements.

This report provides two options for Council to consider for the 2025 Canada Day event and beyond:

Option 1 - Extend the current Task Force for one additional year:

At the post-event meeting where staff sought feedback from Task Force members, the main point that all members agreed upon was that the timeline was much too tight from the formation of the Task Force in December to enable the planning of the event. More time was desired to secure sponsorships, have a comprehensive marketing campaign, and entertain ideas suggested by committee members.

This option would maintain a Committee of Council and a new Terms of Reference would be developed including an extension of the current term. Staff would recommend that applications are accepted to add members to replace those who may not return; however, the existing committee members that return would be permitted to begin planning immediately.

Should this be the option that Council selects, the 2025 Operating budget request would increase part time staffing to offset full-time staff delegated to work on the event.

Benefits:

- Group has experience working together and background knowledge of the tasks that must be completed
- Would enable to group to begin the planning process in October which addresses the feedback of not having enough lead time to plan and prepare
- Contacts with existing vendors (i.e. bands, sound system provider, electrician)
- Securing of contracts in advance that provide best available vendors
- Can re-use some of the promotional materials, on-line applications for vendors and volunteers
- Still considered a Township event

Option 2 – Utilize a new Full Time Employee under the area of Special Events and Economic Development to plan and run the event:

The need for a staff member who supports the areas of Special Events and Economic Development has been identified both through the Community Services Master Plan and Strategic Planning Sessions.

Benefits:

- Dedicated staff member with expertise to work on planning event with or without the support of a planning committee

- Continues to be a Township run event
- Staff member would be in place to support other special events in the community as recommended in the Community Services Master Plan and strategic planning sessions
- Well planned and executed events contribute to the sense of community for residents and increases tourism and economic development

#### ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Canada Day festivities support the Quality of Life goal through the strategies of Recreation and Leisure Opportunities as well as Arts, Culture and Heritage.

The Community Engagement goal is achieved through Community Events, Belonging and Support for Community Groups, Volunteers, Youth.

#### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

As noted in Report CS-2024-19, there was a surplus from the 2024 event of \$ 9917.43 to be carried to the 2025 event. Staff recommend that Council continue to support the event in 2025 at a suggested amount of \$20,000.00. The Township was extremely fortunate to be a recipient of the Celebrate Canada grant in 2024 in the amount of \$8000.00 which is not a guarantee in future years. Once the structure of the organizing team moving forward is established, timelines will be improved which will assist in securing sponsorships, thereby working towards the goal of sustainability, and decreasing the amount of funding requested of Council.

Should this be the option that Council selects, the 2025 Operating budget request would increase part time staffing to offset full-time staff delegated to work on the event. The amount of staff time is dependant on the scope and complexity of the event. Staff recommend an increase in part-time staffing of approximately \$10,000.00.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

N/A