



## Community Services *Staff Report*

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REPORT NO: CS-2024-19

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services

PREPARED BY: Manuela O’Krafka, Manager of Community Services  
Rochelle Unrau, Chair, 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 23, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force Post-Event Report

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CS-2024-19, 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force Post-Event Report be received for information.

### SUMMARY:

This report contains information on the total event expenditure, successes, and areas for continued improvement as it relates to the 2024 Canada Day in Wilmot Event.

### BACKGROUND:

The 2024 Wilmot Canada Day Event Task Force was appointed on December 11, 2023, with the mandate to plan, implement and execute an inclusive Canada Day celebration event, which normally consists of one focal event on July 1<sup>st</sup>, in combination with smaller complimentary activities such as contests or other events.

The Task Force is required to submit a post-event report to Council within three (3) months of the Canada Day event taking place. This report is to highlight the total event expenditure, successes, and areas for continued improvement.

## REPORT:

At the post-event meeting held on Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, Task Force members were asked to consider 5 questions as follows:

1. What went well during the event planning process?
2. What could be improved upon in the event planning process?
3. What were the successes of the event?
4. What are some things that could be improved upon during the event?
5. Would you want to volunteer on a Township Canada Day Committee again?

Staff led the Task Force members through an exercise where each member was provided an opportunity to provide their feedback on the above questions, intended to gain insight to be considered in this report.

## Successes:

Task Force members were beyond pleased with the turn out of the event. The feedback from the public at the event and on social media was extremely positive.

Feedback from the Task Force members include:

- Great variety of music, activities and games geared to all ages with a focus on families
- Fireworks show exceeded expectations
- Dunk tank, face painting, bouncy castles were a huge draw for children
- Participation by the Jr. Optimists was greatly appreciated, and they provided an even wider variety of fun activities. Task Force members commented how hard the Jr. Optimist group worked and how engaged they were in the event
- On-site food provided by the New Hamburg Optimist Club was a huge success, great food and very efficient service
- The Sunrise Ceremony and inclusion of various cultural and special interest groups (i.e. Agricultural Society, Cadets etc.) provided additional activities that were great learning opportunities, as well as providing a great sense of community
- The additional sponsorship funding obtained, not only for the financial support, but overall support of the event
- The William Scott Park location was enjoyed by patrons
- There were over 50 volunteers who offered their time to work over the course of the day
- The Task Force members worked very well together as a team
- Support from Township staff at all levels (i.e. planning, running meetings, set up, clean up and providing assistance during the event)
- Transparency especially in regard to making the financial details of the event publicly available

Likely the highest indicator of success is that each member of the Task Force indicated that they would like to assist with the Canada Day event again in response to question 5.

### Areas for Continued Improvement:

The main feedback shared by all Task Force members was that they were not given sufficient time to plan and execute the event as the Task Force was not appointed until mid-December, with the first meeting being held in January. A late summer-early fall time to begin planning the following year's event would be more appropriate.

Although Task Force members were extremely pleased with the overall event, there were some learning experiences for continued improvement including:

- Lack of parking at William Scott Park, with more time and secured funding, the group would like to investigate the possibility of shuttles
- Activities were scheduled to end at 4pm to allow for a pause and clearing out and setting up for the fireworks between 4pm and 7pm, however, we did not adequately advertise the end time of the family activities. The timeline of the events should be clear when promoting, and should include start and end times
- With such a great turnout at night for the fireworks, recommendation was to have some activities continue past 4pm until the beginning of the fireworks
- More posters up around town promoting the event
- Should have had sound system for Sunrise Ceremony
- Signage at the park including a welcome sign at the entrance with mapped location of activities and a closed sign at the boat launch
- More food options later in the day, complimentary to what the Optimist Club are offering (i.e. food truck that offers ice cream or dessert), perhaps a vendor to sell concessions and glo-sticks
- The structure of the meetings was very prohibitive to planning. The group struggled without being able to communicate between meeting dates and only being permitted to discuss what was on the agenda. The meetings were increased to twice monthly to help in this regard, but members found that it still stifled creative ideas and was not efficient due to the time constraints
- Not enough time to secure sponsorships, and not far enough ahead in the planning process to have posters or marketing materials prepared when approaching potential sponsors. Sponsors who were approached were very supportive, however, more time to secure sponsorships would be advantageous
- Transition from a primarily Township run event to more volunteer based to limit some of the restrictions

**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:****Total Event Expenditure:**

Council had committed an initial \$25,000.00 towards the event, which Task Force members are very grateful for. Additionally, the Township and Task Force were successful in attaining the Federal "Celebrate Canada Grant" in the amount of \$8000.00; as well, Task Force members secured \$6,050.00 in sponsorships and donations. As per the attached documents, total event expenditure amounted to \$29,132.57.

Revenues for the event amounted to \$39,050.00

Expenses for the event amounted to \$29,132.57

Surplus to be carried to the 2025 event: \$9917.43

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. 2024 Canda Day Budget