



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** March 6, 2009
From: Kate Sparrow **File:** 01-0103-60-CORE2/2009-
Director, Richmond Olympic Office Vol 01
Re: **Richmond Winterfest Weekend Final Report and Evaluation**

Staff Recommendation

That Council receive this report for information.

Kate Sparrow
Director, Richmond Olympic Office
(604-276-4129)

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY SECRETARIAT	YES	NO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES	NO
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Staff Report

Origin

The third annual Richmond Winterfest Weekend was held February 14 and 15, 2009 at the Richmond Olympic Oval. The purpose of this report is to update council on the successes and challenges of the 2009 event.

Analysis

The primary goals of the 2009 Richmond Winterfest Weekend were to build capacity and partnerships that will aid the City in meeting its event obligations for 2010 and beyond. Other goals for the Winterfest Weekend included engaging and inspiring the Richmond community, and creating an awareness and excitement for Richmond as a Venue City and international tourist destination.

The 2009 Richmond Winterfest Weekend was well managed with a number of fully integrated activities, ensuring its popularity with the community, sponsors and media.

2009 Richmond Winterfest highlights include:

- Approximately 47,000 guests over the two day event,
- The participation of over 900 school children in the entertainment and arts programming of the event,
- 350 volunteers helped manage and operate the event,
- Approximately \$578,000 in cash and Value-In-Kind sponsorship, contributing to an overall budget of \$668,000,
- Over \$200,000 in media sponsorship value,
- The participation of 22 sport, health and cultural organizations,
- Integration of community and professional entertainment on one stage,
- Re-branding the weekend event as “Richmond Winterfest Weekend” to become the key event within the newly developed “Richmond Winter Festival of the Arts”,
- Testing of 2010 programs such as hosting the Canadian Ice Carving team and presenting the 700-piece Richmond School District Choir and Band.

The event was also successful in achieving the following outcomes for the City of Richmond.

Sustainability and Legacy

To ensure the sustainability of Richmond Winter Festival, event management built on last year’s successful partnerships with large community and business groups by strengthening these existing partnerships and building new strategic alliances. This will go a long way to supporting healthy cultural and sporting events in Richmond’s future.

Social Responsibility

Richmond Winterfest continued to focus on supporting social causes in Richmond by offering space and infrastructure to local, regional and provincial non-profit organizations for the promotion of their products and services. The event also offered marketing opportunities for a number of fund-raising programs.

Financial Responsibility/Sponsorship

One of the goals of the Richmond Winterfest Weekend is to be a self-sustaining event by 2011, and to take its place with other annual festivals offered by and for the citizens of Richmond, by increasing its focus on arts and culture.

In 2009, cash and value-in-kind sponsorship, not including media, totalled \$578,000, a significant increase from the 2008 event. The City contribution of \$90,000 in cash and City services remained the same as in previous years. The majority of the 2009 sponsors were pleased with the success of the event and the excellent exposure they received in the community and media. As a result sponsors have indicated strong interest in supporting an event in 2010 and beyond. As well, the event attracted media of approximately \$200,000 in value plus earned media worth approximately \$150,000.

Environmental Responsibility

Event management paid special attention to good environmental practices and awareness by developing specific recycling and environmental programs with the goal of becoming a carbon neutral event by 2010.

Event Management

An Organizing Committee, made up of City staff and leadership volunteers was formed to ensure a coordinated community direction for the event. This committee took over many key roles that ensured smooth delivery and management of the weekend event.

Specialists were contracted to assist in the operational functions of the event; a sponsorship contractor was also hired to assist in the development and implementation of a strategic sponsorship plan.

Building Community

Richmond Winterfest continues to be an integral part of the Spirit of BC Week in Richmond leading up to 2010. This province wide initiative is active in communities across the province. This year the event featured two official Spirit Committee activities: the Spirit Skate, a free-to-the-public community skate, and "Paint the Town Red", a program which encourages participants to show Canadian athletes their support by wearing red clothing.

Volunteer Management

The 2009 Richmond Winterfest Weekend continues to be a major stepping-stone on the road to developing volunteer capacity within Richmond for the 2010 Games. The City of Richmond contracted Volunteer Richmond to recruit and manage volunteers leading up to 2010 and the 2009 Winterfest Weekend was a key recruiting event. 350 volunteers took part in the event at all levels of operations. A number of volunteers took on leadership roles. As well, experience from the Official Opening and past Winterfest events, was drawn upon in the development of enhanced training sessions. This same experience is being used to further refine training plans for the 2010 volunteer program.

Communications Plan and Increasing Richmond's Visibility

A detailed communications plan was established based on lessons and recommendations from the 2007 and 2008 events. Activities included an increased emphasis on ethnic marketing to increase diverse audiences and re-branding the event with a new name, logo and look that was used throughout all marketing materials (street banners, outdoor bus shelters, brochures, posters, programs, etc.).

City staff worked hard to ensure an exceptional visitor experience that inspired and engaged participants in all the excitement and diversity that Richmond has to offer. Media sponsors were key to this plan, and event organizers continued to form strong alliances with media partners. A combination of promotion and advertising leading up to the event, culminating in live, on-site broadcasts fuelled the excitement and greatly increased the guest count.

Programming

The main stage, as well as many of the other activities, were programmed with a combination of community and professional performers, and was themed to appeal to a broad multi-cultural audience. The event celebrated our diverse community and supported our local arts scene by presenting professional entertainers and visual artists who maintain a local Richmond connection.

Location

The 2009 Richmond Winterfest Weekend event was held at the Richmond Olympic Oval for the first time. This afforded the organizing committee with key insights into the strengths and challenges of hosting an event in the Oval.

The Richmond Olympic Oval is a major jewel in the crown of Richmond's event infrastructure. The location is stunning, the building is breathtaking, and the size and design of the building make it suitable for many types of events. As with any brand new building there were a number of items that can be easily improved upon to make the building even more event-friendly. Event organizers have provided a detailed list of these items to Oval staff.

A key element of the Winterfest Weekend operational plan dealt with traffic management. As the Oval becomes a significant event venue in the future, experience gained at the Official Opening event and Winterfest Weekend is being drawn upon to produce a traffic and transportation plan to be used for future Oval events.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact.

Conclusion

Richmond is poised for great things in 2010 and beyond. As an Olympic Venue City, Richmond is on the brink of becoming an important tourism centre and building events and event infrastructure is key in building tourism products. The Richmond Olympic Oval is not only the jewel in the crown of the City's event infrastructure, but is also a significant tool to assist the City in reaching its event capacity building goals, ensuring a vibrant and exciting cultural and sporting life for our citizens now and in the future.

The 2009 Richmond Winterfest Weekend continues to be a valuable community engagement tool. The event acts as a marketing vehicle for promoting City initiatives, as well as a catalyst for local non-profits supporting community innovation, pride and excellence. The Event generates excitement and support for the 2010 Games with event partners and stakeholders. Integration of these partner organizations into the event program also builds capacity and relationships, integrates networks and allows groups to cooperatively provide dynamic, quality opportunities for the event guests and the community, now, and in the future.



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