



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Jane Fernyhough, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
Date: June 28, 2017
File: 11-7000-01/2017-Vol 01
 Mike Redpath, Senior Manager, Parks
Re: Special Event Permits Pilot Project

Staff Recommendation

1. That a one-year pilot project to obtain special event permits from the British Columbia Liquor Control and Licensing Branch for select City events, as detailed in the staff report titled, "Special Event Permits Pilot Project", dated June 28, 2017 from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services and the Senior Manager, Parks, be endorsed; and
2. That a report be brought back to Council with the results of the pilot project.

Jane Fernyhough
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage
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Mike Redpath
 Senior Manager, Parks
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REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Recreation Services Business Licence RCMP Risk Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: CJ	APPROVED BY CAO (ACTING)

Staff Report

Origin

Over the past three years, the British Columbia Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) issued a series of policy directives that enable organizations to hold public events with site-wide liquor accessibility under a “Special Event Permit” (SEP). These changes are partly due to increased public demand for a wider array of event amenities, as well as the need to provide event organizers with additional tools to manage public safety.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s support for a one-year pilot project to apply for and implement SEPs at select City events to assess the viability and benefits to the public of such permits for future events in Richmond. Final decisions on the issuing of SEPs rests with the RCMP.

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond’s demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.

- 2.3. *Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*
- 2.4. *Vibrant arts, culture and heritage opportunities.*

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #8 Supportive Economic Development Environment:

Review, develop and implement plans, policies, programs and practices to increase business and visitor appeal and promote local economic growth and resiliency.

- 8.2. *Opportunities for economic growth and development are enhanced.*

Findings of Fact

Special Event Permit

The provincial Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) regulates the manufacturing, sale and access to liquor in British Columbia in accordance with the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and the *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulations*.

Historically, the LCLB mandated that any public events involving the serving or sale of liquor were required to maintain clearly defined liquor service areas. This was achieved through the use of “beverage gardens”, which barred minors from fenced areas.

On April 28, 2014, the LCLB issued Policy Directive No. 14-02, which allowed for site-wide liquor licensing at a public event under a “Special Occasion Licence” (SOL), the predecessor of the SEP. The LCLB reserved the right, however, to require an event to install beverage gardens if it deemed it necessary from a public safety perspective. To obtain an SOL, an organizer was required to include a security plan along with its application. Liquor inspectors reviewed the security plan for risks to public safety, based on factors such as event character, size, duration, patron demographics, lighting, site visibility, licensee compliance history, crowd density and security presence. If approved, an SOL would enable event organizers to serve or sell beer, cider, coolers, wine or spirits on site in accordance with set maximum single serving sizes and at a cost-recovery rate (unless all profits were donated to a charitable purpose). Shooters were prohibited as they were designed for rapid consumption, and promoted over-consumption and intoxication.

On January 23, 2017, the LCLB implemented Policy Directive No. 16-18, which changed the name of the application from a “Special Occasion Licence” to a “Special Event Permit” to reflect the temporary nature of the LCLB’s liquor authorization. Under the amended policy, businesses may now apply for an SEP provided that any funds raised are donated to a charitable purpose. This amendment allows legal liability to follow the event organizer, whom is responsible for the planning and implementation of the SEP requirements. If liquor is sold under an SEP at above-cost-recovery rates, a revenue report must be submitted to the LCLB within 60 days of the permit expiry, along with proof that such profits have been donated to a charitable purpose.

Pilot Project

In the past, both the City and local community groups have held public events that served or sold liquor through the use of beverage gardens. While this format provides logistical benefits through the use of a condensed, controlled area, according to the BC Liquor Policy Review Final Report it can encourage increased alcohol consumption over short durations as the licensed area is typically segregated, both physically and psychologically, from the main programming for the event. Site-wide licensing would enable organizers to provide more integrated programs and amenities to the benefit and enjoyment of the attending public.

Should Council endorse this pilot project, City staff will apply for, and pending LCLB and RCMP approval, implement SEPs at select City festivals over the following year, beginning with the 2017 Harvest Fest in September, to evaluate the demand for, logistics of and benefits to Richmond residents of site-wide liquor accessible events. Events included in the pilot project will be selected based on the suitability of its program, character and location.

Following completion of the pilot project, staff will report back to Council on its SEP findings, including the suitability, challenges and benefits of providing site-wide liquor accessibility for future City events.

Since 2014, a variety of events have been successfully held in the MetroVancouver region with site-wide licensing under the SEP process. These include, but are not limited to, the following events:

- Burnaby Blues & Roots Festival (Burnaby);

- Live Nation: Concerts at Deer Lake Park (Burnaby);
- European Festival (Burnaby);
- Enchant Christmas Maze & Market (Vancouver);
- Steveston Dragon Boat Festival (Richmond); and
- Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival (Vancouver).

Logistics and Public Safety

For each City event selected for participation in the pilot project staff will:

1. Submit a Richmond Event Approval Coordination Team (REACT) application to ensure consideration and coordination of City and emergency services, which will be reviewed by and require the approval of:
 - a. members of REACT;
 - b. the City's Risk Management department; and
 - c. the RCMP, whom take into consideration:
 - the size, duration and time of the event;
 - the type of music and entertainment provided;
 - the type and size of expected crowds;
 - whether the event is professionally managed;
 - the site location and the controlled area.
2. If approved by REACT and the RCMP, staff will submit a SEP application to the LCLB for approval.

Some of the factors considered by REACT, the RCMP and the LCLB when assessing security and public safety for a SEP event include:

- a fully fenced site with controlled entry and exit points;
- an age verification system, where patrons must produce two pieces of government identification to verify their age and receive a 19+ wristband in order to be served a licensed beverage;
- security guards in service areas and strategically placed throughout the site to:
 - check identification;
 - ensure anyone consuming alcohol is wearing a 19+ wristband; and
 - monitor the crowd;
- an experienced contractor to manage the SEP process on behalf of the City, which would include acquiring and verifying appropriate insurance coverage, the hiring and training of a bar manager and staff, and obtaining the necessary Serving It Right credentials; and
- restrictions on the quantity and size of drinks served.

Benefits

Benefits of implementing a SEP at suitable City events will include:

- *Enhanced event amenities and the deterrence of rapid liquor consumption:* The public will be able to enjoy event programming throughout the site, while partaking in a licensed beverage at their leisure;
- *Enhanced security:* Additional security, which would normally be tethered to a traditional beverage garden, will be strategically situated throughout the entire site; and
- *Economic instigator for local goods and services:* The site-wide accessibility of licensed beverages at an event may draw additional visitors and encourage attendees to stay for longer periods, which will provide greater exposure for local entertainers, goods and services.

2017 Harvest Fest – Pilot Initiative

As part of the City's Canada 150 celebrations, the City is hosting its inaugural Harvest Fest from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday September 30, 2017 at Garden City Lands – a 136.5 acre park in the heart of Richmond. This free festival, which is expected to draw over 10,000 people from MetroVancouver, will celebrate the diverse factors that make Richmond a hub for urban agriculture.

Due to its moderate size and agricultural and food-oriented focus, the 2017 Harvest Fest serves as an ideal event to include as part of the pilot project. In addition to providing a program platform to showcase local wineries and breweries, the site will be fully contained by perimeter fencing as part of the Agricultural Land Commission's conditions for the festival. As such, one of the major logistical requirements for a SEP will already be satisfied.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of this report. Any costs incurred to implement the pilot project would be incorporated into the existing budget for each SEP event.

Conclusion

Over the years, Richmond has built a strong reputation for successful, world-class community events. In order to address increased public demand for a wider array of event amenities and provide event organizers with additional tools to manage public safety, staff recommend that Council support a one-year pilot project to obtain special event permits from the British Columbia Liquor Control and Licensing Branch for select City events. Following completion of the pilot project, staff will report back to Council on the results.



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