



The Corporation of the Town of Essex
Essex Festival Committee Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2025, 6:00 pm
60 Fairview Ave W, Essex, ON N8M 1B6

Present: Cate Back, Member
Member - Knapp, Derek
Member - McGuire-Blais, Katie
Member - Verbeek, Kim
Member - Atkinson, Nicole
Vice Chair - Tapping, Richard
Councillor - Garon, Joe, Ward 1

Absent: Member - Hellinga, Chris
Member - Nichol, Leighanne
Member - Desjardins, Tiffany

Also Present: Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services
Everett Vanlare, Recording Secretary

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request. Please contact the Clerk's Office at clerks@essex.ca or 519-776-7336 extension 1100 or 1101.

1. Call to Order

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples), and of the Huron-Wendat Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

4. Adoption of Published Agenda

4.1 Essex Festival Committee Meeting Agenda for January 29, 2025

FC25-01-01

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Kim Verbeek

That the published agenda for the January 29, 2025 Essex Festival Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Essex Festival Committee Minutes for June 27, 2024

FC25-01-02

Moved By Derek Knapp

Seconded By Cate Back, Member

That the minutes of the Essex Festival Committee meeting held June 27, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

6.1 Essex Festival Committee Election of Chair

FC25-01-03

Moved By Kim Verbeek

Seconded By Katie McGuire-Blais

That Joe Garon be elected as Chair of the Essex Festival Committee for 2025.

Carried

6.2 Essex Festival Committee Election of Vice Chair

FC25-01-04

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Kim Verbeek

That Richard Tapping be elected as Vice Chair of the Essex Festival Committee for 2025.

Carried

7. Financials

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, spoke to the committee about budget and financial status of the 2025 festival. Jake said there is no concrete number that is available but there should be for next meeting.
- Joe Garon, Chair, explained the firework show proposal has come in with the same company as the previous festival and the company was willing to match last years price for the same show even though costs have gone up.
- Joe Garon, Chair, offered to the committee the chance to go and attend a festival conference that is taking place in Kitchener this year. This has helped gain insightful ideas and see new attractions for past festivals.

FC25-01-05

Moved By Councillor Garon, Chair

Seconded By Katie McGuire-Blais

Joe Garon, Chair, motions to send Nicole Atkinson, Member, Cate Back, Member, and Derek Knapp, Member, to the Festival and Events Ontario Conference On February 24-26.

8. Unfinished Business

- Joe Garon, Chair, spoke to shortening the meeting lengths from years past and making more efficient use of time this year.
- Joe Garon, Chair, discussed notes that he has made for the previous 2024 festival that took place. The overall impressions of the festival in 2024 were positive but that came with some criticism. This included garbage's not being emptied enough in the food court, having supervision and security at admission gates. Adding more accessible parking, better signage and finding more sponsorships for the festival. More items included better communication with the vendors, having ice on site that is available for vendors to buy. Wineries want to sell bottles that customers are able to take home from the sip n' shop as well as new glasses that have measurements on the glass.
- Joe Garon, Chair, looks to invest in the following items for the 2025 festival. Branded admission tents that will be put at the entrances of the festival. Branded table covers for admission tables as well as extension cords for the festival. Adding a new power supply station that will be available for the food court area.
- The Committee received the verbal updates listed in agenda Item 6.

8.1 Operations and Site Management

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, talked about the new generator that was installed at the Essex Centre Sports Complex and how this can act as a backup for the beer tent lighting incase of a power outage. Another issue that came up last year was the ATM's not being able to function due to the large influx of causing a network outage. Possible solutions may include creating a separate network for the ATM's.

8.1.1 Festival Grounds Layout

- No new updates to report.

8.1.2 Set-up and Take Down

- No new updates to report.

8.1.3 Perimeter Fencing

- No new updates to report.

8.1.4 Signage

- No new updates to report.

8.1.5 Admission Fees

- No new updates to report.

8.1.6 Park Hours

- No new updates to report.

8.1.7 Parking

- No new updates to report.

8.1.8 Off-Site Parking

- No new updates to report.

8.1.9 Shuttle Transportation

- No new updates to report.

8.1.10 Family Tent

- No new updates to report.

8.1.11 Bike Valet

- No new updates to report.

8.2 Marketing, Social Media and Advertising

- Joe Garon, Chair, said that Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, is looking to take a step back from the social media aspect of the committee and is looking for some to step up. Katie Mcguire-Blais, Member, said she can step up and run the social media with Cate Beck, Member.
- Derek Knapp, Member, brought up the possibility of hiring a social media manager, that was liked by other members of the committee and will be looked into further.

8.3 Sponsorship

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, will take care of sponsorships.

8.4 Volunteers

- Cate Back, Member, will be responsible for volunteers again.

8.5 Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, and Jake Morassut discussed how to make the vendor application form easier to fill out, with suggestions such as removing questions and switching to google forms.

8.5.1 Vendor Rates

- Joe Garon, Chair, explained the vendor rates that will be implemented this year to the committee. The changes to these rates include making it much more straightforward as pricing will be directly related to the size of the vendors spot.
- Joe Garon, Chair, explained the proposed Vendor prices. The new rates will be based on ten foot increments except for Food Vendors and Snack and Beverage Vendors, they will be based on five foot increments.

FC25-01-06

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Cate Back, Member

The Committee approves the new rates proposed by Joe Garon,Chair, for Commercial Vendors.

Carried

FC25-01-07

Moved By Katie McGuire-Blais

Seconded By Cate Back, Member

The Committee approves the new rates proposed by Joe Garon, Chair, for Food and Snack & Beverage Vendor

Carried

8.5.2 Food and Beverage Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, will be responsible for the food vendors with Derek Knapp, Member.
- Joe Garon, Chair, spoke to the committee about the amount of food vendor applications he has received and the variety of choices that will be available.

FC25-01-08

Moved By Cate Back, Member

Seconded By Katie McGuire-Blais

Katie McGuire-Blais, Member, motions to have a non-profit rate for snack and beverage from the Town of Essex. This rate will be %50 off the original amount.

Carried

8.5.3 Non-Food/Craft Vendors

- Katie McGuire-Blais, Member, will be responsible for non-food/craft vendors.

8.6 Attractions

8.6.1 Youth Talent Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, Confirmed that Carolyn Garon will lead this event and if Tiffany Desjardins can not participate this year, Kim Verbeek, member will step in.

8.6.2 Kid Zone

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed this event and that Katie McGuire-Blais, Member will be responsible for this area

8.6.3 Chill Zone

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed this event and that Nicole Atkinson, Member will be responsible for this area

8.6.4 Parade

- No new updates to report.

8.6.5 Horse Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, asked the Committee if the Horse show is needed this year. There was no decision reached.

8.6.6 Car Show

- Chris Hellinga, and Katie McGuire-Blais, will be responsible for the Car Show.

8.6.7 Watermelon Contest

- Kim Verbeek, Member will be responsible for this event.

8.6.8 Visual Display (Fireworks / Drone show)

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that the firework show will cost the same amount as last year if they go with the same company.

8.6.9 Bingo

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, will be responsible for this event.

8.6.10 Clash of the Voices

- Joe Garon, Chair, advocated to keep this event anticipating more participation this year.

8.6.11 Thrill Zone

- No new updated to report

8.6.12 Midway & Amusement Rides

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that the same company will be coming back from last years festival.

8.6.13 I-Flip

- Joe Garon, Chair, distributed a sheet that shows a possible layout for a group of performers called I-Flip that have performed at other festivals and how it would affect the layout of the fairgrounds

8.6.14 Escape Room

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, said that she will reach out to a portable escape room vendor and see if they would be interested in coming to the festival.

8.7 Sip 'N Shop Wine Mixer

8.7.1 Decor/Decorations

- Joe Garon, Chair, suggested to the Committee that they should look into buying linen and tablecloths for the Sip N' Shop instead of renting to save money for future events.

8.7.2 Non-Profit Beneficiary

- No new updates to report.

8.7.3 Wineries

- No new updates to report.

8.7.4 Caterer/Food Vendors

- No new updates to report.

8.7.5 BIA Vendors

- No new updates to report.

8.7.6 Hours of Operation

- No new updates to report.

8.7.7 Admission Fees

- No new updates to report.

8.7.8 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

8.7.9 Raffle

- No new updates to report.

8.7.10 Ticket Pricing

- No new updates to report.

8.7.11 Parking

- No new updates to report.

8.7.12 Layout

- No new updates to report.

8.8 Beer Tent

- Joe Garon, Chair, Confirmed that the same company will be coming back. He brought up the possibility of teaming up a local company to provide a premium bar that provides a different selection of drinks.

8.8.1 Hours of Operation

- No new updates to report.

8.8.2 Admission

- No new updates to report.

8.8.3 Product and Pricing

- No new updates to report.

8.8.4 Bar Management

- No new updates to report.

8.8.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No new updates to report.

8.8.6 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

8.8.7 Parking

- No new updates to report.

8.8.8 Power

- No new updates to report.

8.8.9 Layout

- No new updates to report.

8.9 Main Stage

8.9.1 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

8.9.2 Stage Rental

- No new updates to report.

8.9.3 Production

- No new updates to report.

8.9.4 Bar Management

- No new updates to report.

8.9.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No new updates to report.

8.9.6 Parking

- No new updates to report.

8.9.7 Power

- No new updates to report.

8.9.8 Other Rentals and Operation

- No new updates to report.

8.9.9 Layout

- No new updates to report.

8.10 Secondary Stage

- No new updates to report.

8.10.1 Location

- No new updates to report.

8.10.2 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

8.10.3 Stage Rental

- No new updates to report.

8.10.4 Production

- No new updates to report.

8.10.5 Power

- No new updates to report.

8.10.6 Other Rentals and Operation

- No new updates to report.

9. Adjournment

FC25-01-09

Moved By Derek Knapp

Seconded By Kim Verbeek

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:45pm.

Carried

10. Future Meetings

- Future Meetings will be taking place on February 20, March 20, April 17, May 15, June 12, June 26.

Chair

Recording Secretary