



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

February 20, 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
Vice Chair - Tapping, Richard
Councillor - Garon, Joe, Ward 1

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

Also Present: Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services
Everett Vanlare, Recording Secretary
Marc Tortola, Manager, Strategic Communications

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 February 20, 2025

FC25-02-10

Moved By Cate Back, Member
Seconded By Derek Knapp

That the published agenda for the February 20, 2025 Essex Festival Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Essex Festival Committee Minutes for January 29, 2025

FC25-02-11

Moved By Richard Tapping, Vice-Chair

Seconded By Cate Back, Member

That the minutes of the Essex Festival Committee meeting held January 29, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Financials

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, explained the financials for the 2025 festival and went over the 2024 financials from the previous Festival. Jake reminded the Committee to try their best to buy local and Canadian.
- Joe Garon, Chair, discussed buying branded items such as tables and tents to save money in the long run and prevent renting.

7. Unfinished Business

7.1 Operations and Site Management

7.1.1 Festival Grounds Layout

- Joe Garon, Chair, shared a potential layout for the festival with the committee. This included the removal of I-flip and moving the secondary stage to a central location in the food court. The committee discussed the potential of having a better production for the secondary stage.

7.1.2 Set-up and Take Down

- No new updates to report.

7.1.3 Perimeter Fencing

- Joe Garon, Chair, plans to order the fence soon when he confirms the amount that is needed.

7.1.4 Signage

- No new updates to report.

7.1.5 Admission Fees

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that admission fees will stay the same as the 2024 festival.

7.1.6 Park Hours

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that park hours will stay the same as the 2024 festival.

7.1.7 Parking

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that there will be additional accessible parking spots.

7.1.8 Off-Site Parking

- Joe Garon, Chair asked the committee about vendor parking passes and whether vendor employees should be given parking passes in order to free up parking spaces for patrons. The Committee agreed that offsite parking with a shuttle service will be available to accommodate vendor parking.

7.1.9 Shuttle Transportation

- Joe Garon, Chair confirmed the shuttle will be booked and the route and advertising will be discussed at a later date.

7.1.10 Family Tent

- Joe Garon, confirmed the family comfort tent will be back and wants to discuss purchasing a branded tent that can be used for multiple events.

7.2 Marketing, Social Media and Advertising

- Marc Tortola, Manager, Strategic Communications, was present to provide the committee with insight on how important social media is to promoting an event this large. Marc discussed different strategies that are needed for different platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. Katie McGuire-Blais, member and Cate Back, member, will plan a meeting.

7.3 Sponsorship

- Joe Garon, Chair, explained to the committee that the amount of sponsorship money from last year is budgeted for this year. Joe asked Committee members to suggest companies or people who would be open to sponsoring.

7.4 Volunteers

- Cate Back, member, has found an individual to cover the volunteer booth for her during festival hours that will allow her to be present and take photos and videos. Cate spoke to the committee about the need for volunteers in certain areas and if they members will require anymore volunteers.
- Joe Garon, Chair confirmed that the committee will be buying water and ice for volunteers and that T-shirts will be purchased.

7.5 Vendors

7.5.1 Vendor Rates

FC25-01-12

Moved By Katie McGuire-Blais

Seconded By Kim Verbeek

That the new hydro rates for vendors be approved.

Carried

7.5.2 Food and Beverage Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed the application links are now active for Food and Beverage Vendors.

7.5.3 Non-Food/Craft Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed the application links are now active for Non-Food/Craft Vendors.

7.6 Attractions

7.6.1 Youth Talent Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that applications are open.

7.6.2 Kid Zone

- Joe Garon, Chair, told the committee a company reached out offering a rock climbing wall and inflatables. This will be discussed more at next meeting.

7.6.3 Chill Zone

- Joe Garon, Chair, shared that Nicole has new ideas for this area and will share next meeting.

7.6.4 Parade

- Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, is looking into marching bands from Detroit and should be able to confirm next meeting.
- Joe Garon, Chair, is looking to have the parade float decorated in a way where it will be suitable for multiple parades.

7.6.5 Pony Rides

- Joe Garon, Chair, asked the committee if the Horse Show should go forward. The Committee suggested Pony Rides for this years festival.

7.6.6 Car Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that more volunteers will be needed for the car show in 2025. The same area in the Essex downtown area is confirmed for this event. The car show is confirmed for Friday during festival weekend.

7.6.7 Watermelon Contest

- Kim Verbeek, Member, confirmed this event.

7.6.8 Visual Display (Fireworks)

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed this event.

7.6.9 Bingo

Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed this event.

7.6.10 Clash of the Voices

- Joe Garon, confirmed this event will be happening.

7.6.11 Thrill Zone

- No new updates to report.

7.6.12 Midway & Amusement Rides

- No new updates to report.

7.6.13 Escape Room

- No new updates to report.

7.6.14 Dog Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, asked committee members if they would be open to having more dog shows than last festival.

7.6.15 Wrestling

- Joe Garon, Chair, will reach out to the wrestling group to confirm.

7.7 Sip 'N Shop Wine Mixer

7.7.1 Decor/Decorations

- No new updates to report.

7.7.2 Non-Profit Beneficiary

- No new updates to report.

7.7.3 Wineries

- No new updates to report.

7.7.4 Caterer/Food Vendors

- No new updates to report.

7.7.5 BIA Vendors

- No new updates to report.

7.7.6 Hours of Operation

- No new updates to report.

7.7.7 Admission Fees

- No new updates to report.

7.7.8 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, has reached out to dueling pianos for entertainment.

7.7.9 Raffle

- No new updates to report.

7.7.10 Ticket Pricing

- No new updates to report.

7.7.11 Parking

- No new updates to report.

7.7.12 Layout

- No new updates to report.

7.8 Beer Tent

- Joe Garon, Chair, spoke to the Beer Tent company Ernabus Concessions our licensed beverage contractor and they have a strategy to go cashless this year with cash being available in case of emergency. The committee will discuss further.

7.8.1 Hours of Operation

- No new updates to report.

7.8.2 Admission

- No new updates to report.

7.8.3 Product and Pricing

- No new updates to report.

7.8.4 Bar Management

- No new updates to report.

7.8.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No new updates to report.

7.8.6 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

7.8.7 Parking

- No new updates to report.

7.8.8 Power

- No new updates to report.

7.8.9 Layout

- No new updates to report.

7.9 Main Stage

7.9.1 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

7.9.2 Stage Rental

- No new updates to report.

7.9.3 Production

Joe Garon, Chair, is looking to have a video background board to attract more sponsors and attractions.

7.9.4 Bar Management

- No new updates to report.

7.9.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No new updates to report.

7.9.6 Parking

- No new updates to report.

7.9.7 Power

- No new updates to report.

7.9.8 Other Rentals and Operation

- No new updates to report.

7.9.9 Layout

- No new updates to report.

7.10 Secondary Stage

7.10.1 Location

- No new updates to report.

7.10.2 Entertainment

- No new updates to report.

7.10.3 Stage Rental

- No new updates to report.

7.10.4 Production

- Joe Garon, Chair, discussed the idea of bringing a production company to allow for more attractions on this secondary stage.

7.10.5 Power

- No new updates to report.

7.10.6 Other Rentals and Operation

- No new updates to report.

8. Third Party Events

- Joe Garon, will reach out to the Horseshoe group that plays on Sundays.
- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Service, confirmed the Essex Fun Fest 5K but will need more confirmation on the route.

9. New Business

- No new updates to report.

10. Adjournment

FC25-01-13

Moved By Kim Verbeek

Seconded By Richard Tapping, Vice-Chair

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:50pm.

Carried

11. Future Meetings

- March 20, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room
- April 17, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room
- May 15, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room
- June 12, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room
- June 26, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room

Chair

Recording Secretary