



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

March 20, 2025, 6:00 pm
60 Fairview Ave W, Essex, ON N8M 1B6

Present: Member - Hellinga, Chris
 Member, Cate Back
 Member - Knapp, Derek
 Member - Verbeek, Kim
 Member - Atkinson, Nicole
 Vice Chair - Tapping, Richard
 Member - Desjardins, Tiffany
 Councillor - Garon, Joe, Ward 1

Absent: Member - McGuire-Blais, Katie
 Member - Nichol, Leighanne

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 March 20, 2025

FC25-03-14

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Member, Cate Back

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

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Essex Festival Committee Minutes for February 20, 2025.

FC25-03-15

Moved By Richard Tapping, Vice-Chair

Seconded By Tiffany Desjardins

That the minutes of the Essex Festival Committee meeting held February 20, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Verbal report from Cate Back, Nicole Atkinson and Derek Knapp RE: 2025 Festivals and Events Ontario Conference

- Cate Back, Member, Nicole Atkinson, Member, and Derek Knapp, Member, provided the Committee with a document that had a recap of the main takeaways and ideas from the Festival and Events Ontario (FEO) Conference that they thought could be implemented.
- Joe Garon, Chair, discussed the ticketed concert event saying that it would give the Festival the ability to bring in a bigger act and attract more patrons.
- Joe Garon, Chair, and Chris Hellinga, Member, agreed with Cate that the lead volunteer is a great idea and could help Committee members during the Festival.
- Kim Verbeek, Member, thinks having volunteers that would help sort out recycle and trash would help make the Festival more environmentally friendly and should be discussed further.

7. Financials

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, provided financials for the festival, the unaudited reserve is roughly \$168,000. The 2023 reserve was \$117,824 and last year \$43,425 was entered into the current balance with interest earned on the current amount.

8. Unfinished Business

FC25-03-16

Moved By Chris Hellinga

Seconded By Member, Cate Back

That the verbal updates listed in Agenda Item 8 be received.

Carried

8.1 Operations and Site Management

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

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, requests a sign that shows the schedule of events taking place during the weekend near the secondary stage.

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 Comfort Tent

- No new updates to report.

8.1.11 Proposed Items to purchase or invest in outside of 2025 Budget

- Joe Garon, Chair, proposes these purchases would be going above and beyond and recommends using the surplus budget to purchase these items to prevent renting and add convenience.

8.1.11.1 Electrical/Power Source

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, provided a quote for moving a plug from the front of the Essex Arena to a different location so the Food Court is closer to the power pedestal. There is another proposed plug that can be installed to allow the lighting in the Beer Tent and other areas to be tied into the backup generator at the Essex Arena.

FC25-03-17

Moved By Kim Verbeek

Seconded By Tiffany Desjardins

That the Committee cover half of the cost in the amount of \$1,624.40 to make the power to the food court area more accessible.

Carried

8.1.11.2 Gateway Signage

- Joe Garon, Chair, is looking for options to bring forward next meeting.

8.1.11.3 Parade Float Refurbishing

- Joe Garon, Chair, is meeting with Colenutt Signs to see if there are options to have interchangeable panels that allow it to be used for multiple events.
- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, gave an update on the Parade Float and is waiting for an official inspection before funds are allocated to the float.

8.1.11.4 Branded Entrance Tents

- Joe Garon, Chair, wants to get a special entrance for the festival that have roadside appeal to attract more people to the festival

8.1.11.5 Branded Entrance Table Skirting

- No new updates to report.

8.1.11.6 Cocktail Tables and/or Branded Cocktail Table Linens

- Joe Garon, Chair, brought up the possibility of purchasing cocktail tables to stop renting tables and own them.
- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, gave options and storage capabilities for these options.

8.1.11.7 Misc Electrical Cords, Power Bars, etc.

- Joe Garon, Chair, is still waiting to see how many cords come back from other events to get a total inventory.

8.1.12 Bike Valet

- No new updates to report.

8.2 Marketing, Social Media and Advertising

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that there is a new Facebook page for the Festival and it is already getting a lot of traction. There are more opportunities for advertising such as electronic signs in Windsor, this will be discussed further next meeting.

8.3 Sponsorship

- Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, has reached out to everyone who has sponsored last year, still waiting for responses.

8.4 Volunteers

- Cate Back, Member, is working on finishing the form for volunteers to apply. Manager and team lead positions will need to be discussed and what the budget is for snacks and compensation. Richard Tapping, Vice Chair asked for Cate Back, Member to put together a plan for next meeting.

8.5 Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, has changed the deadline for vendor applications to March 24, 2025.

8.5.1 Vendor Rates

- No new updates to report.

8.5.2 Food and Beverage Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed there was 19 food vendors that submitted application

8.5.3 Non-Food/Craft Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed there are 18 non-food vendors that have submitted applications

8.6 Attractions

8.6.1 Youth Talent Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed there are 2 application for the show.

8.6.2 Kid Zone

- No new updates to report.

8.6.3 Chill Zone

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, wants to know how large an area the chill zone will have, this will be answered next meeting.

8.6.4 Parade

- Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, will confirm to cate next meeting how many volunteers will be needed to help the parade.

8.6.5 Pony Rides

- Joe Garon, Chair has reached out to a company that would provide Pony Rides but has not heard back. Tiffany Desjardins, Member, will reach out and receive a quote from another company.

8.6.6 Car Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, asked if a subcommittee should be started given the complexity of the event. Chris Hellinga, Member, agreed that a subcommittee is a great idea since the Car Show has grown over the years.

8.6.7 Watermelon Contest

- Rich Tapping, Vice Chair, confirmed that either No Frills or Foodland will sponsor this event.

8.6.8 Visual Display (Fireworks)

- No new updates to report.

8.6.9 Bingo

- Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, confirmed the bingo is good to go.

8.6.10 Clash of the Voices

- Richard Tapping, Vice Chair, will look for sponsors for this event and confirmed that it is happening.

8.6.11 Midway & Amusement Rides

- Joe Garon, Chair, notified the Committee that an agreement has been made with Worlds Finest Shows on a revised revenues schedule for profit sharing on rides, as well as increased revenue for sponsorship/advertising.
- Nicole Atkinson, Member, requests that the Committee add seating in the Midway to answer requests from patrons, options will be provided at next meeting.

8.6.12 Escape Room

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, will provide a quote for a portable escape room at the next meeting.

8.6.13 Dog Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, received a price from Super Dogs, \$3500 for one day, three 30 minute shows. This will be decided at a later date.

8.6.14 Wrestling

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that the wrestling group is on board. The location is still undecided for this event.

8.6.15 Rock Climbing Wall

- Joe Garon, Chair, provided the Committee with a price for the rock climbing wall. The whole weekend will cost \$6386 plus tax, not including accommodations. This will be decided at a later date.

8.7 Sip 'N Shop Wine Mixer

8.7.1 Decor/Decorations

- No new updates to report.

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

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed prices will stay the same.

8.7.8 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that Dueling Pianos will take place at the Sip 'N Shop. A Caricaturist is an option and will be confirmed at a later date.

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

8.8.1 Hours of Operation

- No new updates to report.

8.8.2 Admission

- Joe Garon, Chair, will propose a pre-sale pass that would allow you to bypass the line for admission at a later date.

8.8.3 Product and Pricing

- Joe Garon, Chair, the product will be staying at the same price. The Beer Tent will be cashless with cash as an emergency backup.

8.8.4 Bar Management

- No new updates to report.

8.8.5 Security and Crowd Control

8.8.6 Entertainment

8.8.7 Parking

8.8.8 Power

8.8.9 Layout

8.9 Main Stage

8.9.1 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that Nostalgic will be playing on Friday at a cost of \$5000 dollars.

8.9.2 Stage Rental

8.9.3 Production

- Joe Garon, Chair, is in the process of confirming a video wall for the main stage that allows video to be played behind the acts.

8.9.4 Bar Management

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

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. Third Party Events

9.1 Walk-a-Thon

- No new updates to report.

9.2 Horseshoes

- No new updates to report.

9.3 Rotary Pancake Breakfast

- Joe Garon, Chair, confirmed that the Rotary Club will be doing the Pancake Breakfast.

10. New Business

- No new updates to report.

11. Adjournment

FC25-03-18

Moved By Chris Hellinga

Seconded By Member, Cate Back

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:15pm.

Carried

12. Future Meetings

- 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