



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

June 12, 2025, 6:00 pm
60 Fairview Ave W, Essex, ON N8M 1B6

Present: Member - Hellinga, Chris
Member, Cate Back
Member - Knapp, Derek
Member - McGuire-Blais, Katie
Member - Verbeek, Kim
Member - Atkinson, Nicole
Vice Chair - Tapping, Richard
Member - Desjardins, Tiffany
Councillor - Garon, Joe, Ward 1
Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events

Absent: Member - Nichol, Leighanne

Also Present: Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services
Janice Aloisio, Administrative Assistant, Community Services

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

- Joe Garon, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

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

- No declarations of Conflict of Interest were brought forward.

4. Adoption of Published Agenda

4.1 Essex Festival Committee Meeting Agenda for June 12, 2025

FC25-06-27

Moved By Member, Cate Back

Seconded By Katie McGuire-Blais

That the published agenda for the June 12, 2025 Essex Festival Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Essex Festival Committee Minutes for May 15, 2025

FC25-06-28

Moved By Tiffany Desjardins

Seconded By Richard Tapping, Vice-Chair

That the minutes of the Essex Festival Committee meeting held May 15, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Financials

6.1 Grants and Requirements

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, provided information received through this event's grant process to enhance the committee's chances of being an eligible recipient in future grant applications. Such items such as data collection pertaining to event attendance broken into hourly reports and obtained through various means i.e. counted in/out gate attendees, apps that track attendance, scanning a QR-code to answer quick survey, tracking third party event attendance like the car show, pancake breakfast etcetera.
- Director Morassut reminded all members to submit any required invoices that require payment to be on-site for the event as soon as possible and listed the invoices submitted to date.

FF25-06-29

Moved By Katie McGuire-Blais

Seconded By Tiffany Desjardins

That, Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services, be instructed to arrange Ground Level Insights to compile data collection on attendees for the 2025 Essex Fun Fest in the amount of \$4,520.00 (including HST), to be paid from the proceeds of the event.

Carried

7. Unfinished Business

FF25-06-30

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Derek Knapp

That, the items listed below be received.

Carried

7.1 Operations and Site Management

7.1.1 Festival Grounds Layout

- Joe Garon, Chair, will email a festival layout to the committee members.

7.1.2 Set-up and Take Down

- Deferred until the next committee meeting.

7.1.3 Perimeter Fencing

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.4 Signage

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised the committee needs to go through the signage in storage prior to the next meeting to assess what is required to get ordered for this year's event.

7.1.5 Admission Fees

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.6 Park Hours

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.7 Parking

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.8 Off-Site Parking

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.9 Shuttle Transportation

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.10 Family Tent

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.11 Bike Valet

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, advised that the initial quote received from Bike Windsor Essex event was higher than previous events requiring an additional \$500.00.
- Committee discussion was had and funding for the overage will come out of one of the other areas funding.

7.1.12 Proposed items to purchase or invest in outside of 2025 Budget

7.1.12.1 Parade Float Refurbishing

- Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events advised that the float has been fixed by the town's public works department and the town's mechanic.
- Mr. Stanley is to provide the Chair, Joe Garon with inside dimensions of the frame for the banner that is being sourced.

7.1.12.2 Branded Entrance Tents

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that he continues to research three well-priced and good quality tents for the front entrance.
- Derek Knapp, Member, provided the Chair with a lead to a company he has found value in using their tent for the last 3 years and believes their products would meet the festival's needs.
- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services advised he would have an assessment of the 'town' tents completed to evaluate their condition for use.
- Katie Blais, Vice Chair, advised that the tents for this year can be borrowed from the Santa Village resources if necessary.

7.1.12.3 Branded Entrance Table Skirting

- No discussion or update was had.

7.1.12.4 Cocktail Tables and/or Branded Cocktail Table Linens

- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services advised that the tables have been purchased and delivered as well as, burgundy fitted tablecloths for these tables.

7.1.12.5 Misc Electrical Cords, Power Bars, Etc.

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that electrical cords, power bars and other supplies for various festival zones which are currently stored in the festival storage area will be evaluated prior to the next meeting and a report brought forward.

7.2 Marketing, Social Media and Advertising

- Katie Blais, Vice-Chair, requested all sub-committees submit any promotional items of their events, including all information and photos to her as soon as possible so she can get them posted to the various social media platforms of the festival.
- Joe Garon, Chair, provided an update on participating radio stations and further advised that the festival's new website platform now has all events listed and circulated a brochure and advised the final version will be completed for distribution by the next committee meeting.
- Joe Garon, Chair, and Rich Tapping, Member will be meeting shortly to create 'reels' and they will be posted for sharing by members very shortly.
- All promos require the Ontario logo on the bottom.
- Promo's will continue promoting cashless and tap options at the event however a cash line will continue to be available at the front entrance gates and not all vendors will be offering this option.

Rich Tapping, Member, advised that he will be creating paid promotional advertisement that will be going live on social media in the coming weeks.

7.3 Sponsorship

- Rich Tapping, Member, advised that sponsorships are done slightly from previous years with a current \$61,000.00 in current pledges.

7.4 Volunteers

- Cate Back, Member, advised to date she has signed up 110 volunteers for the event and has an onsite manager volunteer who will oversee various areas during the event.
- Cate Back, Member, further advised that Nature Fresh will be providing \$750.00 in products to the vendors and asked Director Morassut, to ensure his Summer Intern includes their logo is on the volunteer's name badges.
- Cate Back, Member, further advised Joe Garon, Chair, that she requires a simple 'quick identifiable coloured' identifier for all Committee Members and authorized agents so that volunteers manning the back parking gates can readily identify them. Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events provided Member Back with a sample rear-view mirror hanger that is available on Amazon at a very reasonable price and quantity that she could order.
- Cate Back, Member, further reminded Joe Garon, Chair, of her requirements for the BIA bucks for her volunteers, the free passes for them, having the volunteer shirts available for distribution during the same time as the next committee meeting, the authorization of use of the front lobby sales booth from the 73's as well as having at least 2 'attendee clicker's for entrance counts.
- Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events, advised that he will ensure Member Back has separate internet login credentials other than the public WIFI for full service during the entire weekend, folding tables at the sales booth for water and snacks for her volunteers as well as a portable ice chest and cooler to maintain cold water throughout the weekend for her volunteers.
- Cate Back, Member, advised she will gather additional volunteers to man the front/back entrances with counters for entry/departures that will be logged and re-set hourly during the festival.
- Recommendation came forward to purchase a folding wagon from Costco to hold and distribute the snacks and water to the volunteers during the festival.

7.5 Vendors

7.5.1 Vendor Rates

- No discussion or update was had.

7.5.2 Food and Beverage Vendors

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that an additional food vendor was added to the list of previous food vendors and that he will be following up with the Facility Clerk to ensure fees have been collected for their space and will report back at the next meeting.

7.5.3 Non-Food/Craft Vendors

- Katie Blais, Vice-Chair, advised that she has 53 commercial vendors with all but 2 unpaid booths.
- Vice-Chair, Blais further advised that she will be sending all the vendors' their site set up closer to the event and would appreciate no distribution of any information without her authorization and consent.
- Committee discussion ensued regarding the requests of a couple of non-profit promoters requiring only a one-day location and the cost distribution amongst the 3 groups ending in committee consensus.

7.6 Attractions

7.6.1 Youth Talent Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that 12 have signed up with one being a duet, that the award plaques have been secured.
- Judges for the event will be the Mayor, an Essex Centre business owner and BIA member and Chris Hellinga, Member, volunteered to assist in the event's judging.

7.6.2 Kid Zone

- Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events, advised that he has confirmed power to this area for the festival and that the colouring display board is in good condition for use this year.
- Joe Garon, Chair, that the storage room will be checked however, he advised that several new packages of dry erase markers and tattoos for the area need to be purchased for this weekend.
- Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services advised the requested town programming staff will be available on site for the weekend to perform face painting.
- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the OLG Activation display is very elaborate and the Fun Fest was the one event chosen to host the display in this area and due to size, it will be located next to the Kids Zone, however, fenced off due to age restrictions of that activity. Tim Stanley, Assistant Manager, Facilities and Events advised that he would make arrangements with the Town's Public Works department to have front loader made available for the Wednesday site set up.

7.6.3 Chill Zone

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the misting tents, the charging stations, yard games and chairs are ready and that volunteers will

be tasked with keeping the area neat and tidy and ensuring event items such as charging stations are readily available and that all garbage and litter is picked up.

7.6.4 Parade

- Rich Tapping, Member, advised that to date 14 submissions have been received and that further promotion continues for this event.

7.6.5 Clash of the Voices

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that event submissions have not been received and this may end up being removed from the line up after one final push to get submissions before printing the promotion brochure.

7.6.6 Car Show

- Chris Hellinga, Member, advised that there were issues with the google form created for registration to the car show. Katie Blais, Vice Chair, will check the form to ensure it is working properly.
- Member, Hellinga confirmed the car show road closure area has been increased this year.
- Member, Hellinga further advised that he would require hydro access from one of the local businesses for this event and requested the 3 porta-potties be placed one at each end of and one in the middle of the closed area.
- Rich Tapping, Member, offered to investigate the availability and pricing of solar amplifiers for broadcasting for this event.

7.6.7 Watermelon Contest

- Kim Verbeek, Member, advised she has received confirmation that 12 watermelons have been donated and Director, Morassut advised arrangements for pick up by town staff will be made.

7.6.8 Visual Display (Fireworks)

- No discussion or update was had.

7.6.9 Bingo

- Nicole Atkinson, Member, advised that the chocolate bar bingo event was all set.

7.6.10 Pony Rides

- Tiffany Desjardins, Member, advised that she awaits one additional quote for this event.

7.6.11 Dog Show

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the hotel rooms for the dog show entertainers have been secured.

7.6.12 Wrestling

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised the Border City Wrestler's has been secured for this year and remains a fan favourite at our event.

7.6.13 Midway & Amusement Rides

- No discussion or update was had.

7.6.14 Rock Climbing Wall

- Event is all set.

7.6.15 Escape Room

- Moved to next year.

7.7 Sip 'N Shop Wine Mixer

7.7.1 Decor/Decorations

- Kim Verbeek, Member, will be doing the table centre pieces.
- Tiffany Desjardins, Member, advised that the barrel wine tables have increased in price and are now \$30 each and was instructed by the committee to secure 12 for the event.

7.7.2 Non-Profit Beneficiary

- No update provided.

7.7.3 Wineries

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that one of the previous wineries will not be in attendance this year.
- Committee consensus to only use just the other 5 invited last year and not find a replacement.

7.7.4 Caterer/Food Vendors

- Katie Blais, Vice-Chair, provided a picture of the charcuterie boards she ordered for the event.

7.7.5 BIA Vendors

- Katie Blais, Vice-Chair, advised there are several who have secured their spot for this event.

7.7.6 Hours of Operation

- No discussion or update was had.

7.7.7 Admission Fees

- No discussion or update was had.

7.7.8 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the Caricaturist has been secured for this event.

7.7.9 Raffle

- No discussion or update was had.

7.7.10 Ticket Pricing

- Tickets have been made available for pre-sales through Community Living members, are available at Fate in Essex and at the municipal offices and customer care centres.
- The Town is working on the details of establishing an on-line payment system for ticket sales as the previous ticket sales platform has changed its features and will no longer be used for pre ticket sales.

7.7.11 Parking

- No discussion or update was had.

7.7.12 Layout

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8 Beer Tent

7.8.1 Hours of Operation

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.2 Admission

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.3 Product and Pricing

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.4 Bar Management

- Same as in previous years.
- Will be promoting cashless payment.

7.8.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.6 Entertainment

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.7 Parking

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.8 Power

- No discussion or update was had.

7.8.9 Layout

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9 Main Stage

7.9.1 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that entertainment for the main stage has been secured and has been promoted on social media sites.

7.9.2 Stage Rental

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that he is securing a larger stage for the main stage this year.

7.9.3 Production

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that there will be a separate production company for each of the main and secondary stages.

7.9.4 Bar Management

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9.5 Security and Crowd Control

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9.6 Parking

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9.7 Power

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9.8 Other Rentals and Operation

- No discussion or update was had.

7.9.9 Layout

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that he will be forwarding the stage plot to Tiffany Desjardins, Member, as herself and Caroline Garon, Sub-Member will be handling decor for the stage.
- Cate Back, Member, provided a concept she has designed at her business that she would like to be utilized over the dueling pianos event. Member Back will be forwarding Chair Garon the dimensions of hanging display to determine it will work with the design and decorations established.

7.10 Secondary Stage

7.10.1 Location

- No discussion or update was had.

7.10.2 Entertainment

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the entertainment for the second stage has been secured and has been promoted on social media sites.

7.10.3 Stage Rental

- No discussion or update was had.

7.10.4 Production

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that there will be a separate production company for each of the main and secondary stages.

7.10.5 Power

- No discussion or update was had.

7.10.6 Other Rentals and Operation

- No discussion or update was had.

7.11 3rd Party Events and Partnerships

- Joe Garon, Chair, advised that the 5K run and Legions' horseshoe event have been secured and finalized and awaits final confirmation on the Rotary's Pancake Breakfast, the Legion's fish diner or Brenko's cornholes.

8. Adjournment

FF25-06-31

Moved By Nicole Atkinson

Seconded By Kim Verbeek

That the meeting be adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Carried

9. Future Meetings

- June 26, 2025 - 6pm ECSC - Barnett Meeting Room

Chair

Recording Secretary