



Report to Council

Department: Community Services
Division: Community Services
Date: May 3, 2021
Prepared by: Doug Sweet, Dir. Community Services/Deputy CAO
Report Number: Community Services-2021-04
Subject: 2021 Essex Fun Fest Update
Number of Pages: 4

Recommendation(s)

The following recommendation is provided for the Council's consideration:

1. That Community Services Report 2021-007 entitled "2021 Essex Fun Fest Update" be **received** for council information; and
2. That Council **approve the Essex Fun Fest Committee's recommendation to cancel** the 2021 Essex Fun Fest scheduled July 8-11, 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Purpose

To update Council on the recommendation by the Essex Fun Fest Committee to cancel the 2021 Essex Fun Fest scheduled from July 8-11, 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Background and Discussion

The 33rd annual Essex Fun Fest was scheduled to take place July 8-11, 2021 at the Essex Centre Sports Complex grounds. The 2020 Essex Fun Fest was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the limits set on outdoor social gatherings. To address the pandemic and protect the health and safety of people in Ontario, the Ontario government established a

response framework based on 5 colour categories that have different levels of restrictions to limit the transmission of the virus. Currently the province is in the Grey Lockdown category until at least May 6, 2021 and based on past practice on moving out of a colour zone, regions usually only move to the next colour level. All of the zones have restrictions on outdoor social gatherings but under the current provincial model **even the least restrictive zone of “Green Prevent”, has a maximum limit of 100 people for outdoor public events. Although** vaccinations are occurring for the virus, it is predicted for the province of Ontario the majority of people will not be vaccinated until late summer or early fall. Due to the current restrictions and limits on social gatherings a number of surrounding municipalities have officially cancelled their annual festivals scheduled for 2021. In addition, Festival and Events Ontario has provided an update that most festivals in Ontario have been cancelled until the end of June and they are now being notified of festival cancellations for July and August. It is uncertain whether the current restrictions and social gathering limits would be lifted by July 8th when the Essex Fun Fest is scheduled to start however, festival planning would need to be completed in the very near future in order to ensure the successful delivery of the event. Much of this pre-planning involves confirming particulars of the festival that require deposits that may not be refunded if the festival is cancelled at a later date. Typically, at this point in time, the following would be in progress:

- Confirming of all site logistics such as tents, fencing, stage/sound, porta-johns, lights and electrical;
- Reserving security personnel;
- Booking all entertainment including the main stage, and fireworks;
- Parade arrangements and recruiting participants;
- Securing sponsorships and donations;
- Reserving advertising and promotional materials;
- Recruitment of volunteers; and
- Recruiting food and non-food vendors.

The Essex Fun Fest Committee met on April 21, by video conferencing to discuss the current provincial restrictions and the impact it has on holding a community festival. After discussion and concerns on ensuring social distancing, ability to attract sponsorships, vendors, entertainment, volunteers and potential patrons, the Committee unanimously voted to cancel the 2021 Essex Fun Fest scheduled from July 8-11, 2021. The Committee wants to ensure if a festival was to occur that it would be in a safe environment and with the current pandemic and restrictions they felt this could not be accomplished at this time.

Financial Impact

To date there have been no costs or events booked for the 2021 Essex Fun Fest.

Consultations

Essex Fun Fest Committee

Festival and Events Ontario

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☐ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☒ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☐ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☐ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☒ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.
- ☐ **Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens** while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.