
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 21, 2001
File No.: 0360-20
To: City Manager
From: Acting Recreation Manager
Subject: **Outdoor Events Update**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT City Council accepts this report as information.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with an update on City's role in managing Outdoor Events. The current Outdoor Event application and approval process was implemented three years ago and since that time there has been significant growth and evolution of the process. The number of applications received over the last three years has increased over 58%; from 83 applications in 1999 to 149 applications in 2001.

Historical Perspective:

Prior to 1996 there was no comprehensive outdoor event application and approval process. In 1996 Recreation Services created a new process where information was collected from organizers and circulated among pertinent City Departments. This process proved too time consuming and inefficient as events continued to increase in size and numbers placing additional demands on safety, liability and overall coordination.

In February 1999, City Council passed the Outdoor Events Bylaw #8358 that authorized the formation of the Outdoor Events Committee. The Committee was given the responsibility to oversee the process of managing outdoor events.

The Outdoor Events Committee focused on three main areas:

- Approve events once conditions were met.
- Ensure organizers adhered to conditions under which approval was given.
- Establish procedures to monitor and follow up after the event (and take appropriate action depending on performance).

The Committee has been successful in meeting the goals established by the Outdoor Events By-Law, primarily through improved information sharing between City Departments and agencies as well as an improved focus on reducing risk and liability to the City and ensuring participant and spectator safety.

Current Operation:

The scope and role of the Outdoor Events Committee (OEC) and Recreation Services has evolved during the last three years of managing this process. This change has taken place as a result of increased event organizer expectations, understanding the complexity of each event in order to properly process applications, and being able to effectively manage safety and liability concerns.

Current scope and roll of the OEC and Recreation Services include:

- An effective process of gathering pertinent information in order to make an informed decision on event approval. Additional information gathered includes route maps, site maps, road closures, health and safety-related concerns, insurance coverage, etc.
- Ensuring events proceed as approved, by using an Event Monitor who may visit the event site several times during the event. The role of the Event Monitor is to provide comments back to the committee and staff on documentation, event site layout, utilities, food services, liquor sales & control, garbage/litter, parking & traffic control, security and first aid, race course, public safety & risk management.
- Appropriate follow up with groups to address event concerns and plans for future years.
- The City's financial contribution towards the Outdoor Events application and approval process is over \$130,000 each year. This cost is primarily born by staff costs within Recreation Services, Parks, By-law, and Traffic.

DISCUSSION:

The role of the OEC and Recreation Services has evolved from being a regulatory body focusing on public safety and liability to a community development approach with more collaboration with event organizers. The outcome has been improved event quality, less crisis management during events, and generally a more efficient management of the whole process. The standard required of event organizers by the City has been significantly increased resulting in higher quality events.

Through the overall growth of Outdoor Events there remains a number of challenges to ensure all events meet necessary requirements, both from a well-planned event to safety and liability concerns. These challenges include:

- Increasing requests for road closures.
- Balancing public safety with public convenience.
- Transferring risk and liability to event.
- Escalating demands on City facilities.
- Multiple events using the same venue.
- Sale of liquor in City Parks (Special Occasion Licenses).
- Maintaining efficient planning and follow up.
- Receiving complete event information in a timely manner.

Proactive Planning for the Future:

In addressing the above challenges, through the Outdoor Events Committee and Recreation Services a number of initiatives are currently being reviewed to improve the process and system in managing Outdoor Event requests. These include:

1. Move downtown parade route to Water Street in order to minimize public inconvenience, impact on transit and traffic flow, as well as improve safety and decrease liability exposure.
2. Establishing evaluation criteria regarding extent and timing of road closures. The increasing size of events that request road closures are having a negative impact on traffic flow and transit.
3. Standardizing running routes with detailed information on sign and marshal placement, timing, traffic controls, distances, start and finish set up, washroom requirements, first aid, etc. With a standardized route all public and participant

safety concerns have been identified and addressed which makes the application process more streamlined for the event organizers and the OEC.

4. Re-align staffing duties to more effectively manage growth and event expectations from event organizers.
5. A \$20,000 supplemental has been submitted as part of the 2002 budget, to increase operational field support to deal with increasing costs related to outdoor events. The required funding will assist City staff in providing the best possible venues and supporting services to ensure Kelowna continues to attract and support outdoor events.
6. Identify opportunities, and provide tools such as “event development workshops” to event organizers/groups, that will assist event organizers in planning future events.

SUMMARY:

The Outdoor Event process has seen major growth over the last 3 years not only in number of applications but also in time and involvement in each application. We have moved from a regulatory to a collaborative approach, to enhance our relationship with event organizers and have created a more proactive approach to all planning and approvals. The end result has been reduced risk and liability to the City but also safer, better planned and more successful events.

Our support and involvement in the management of outdoor events is critical, not only from the safety aspect but also as all events increase community pride and provide the opportunity to showcase Kelowna on a national and international level. Through the significance of events hosted within the city, Kelowna is gaining recognition as a major events destination.

Jim Gabriel
Acting Recreation Manager

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Acting Facilities & Stadiums Supervisor

Cc: Director of Parks & Leisure Services
Parks Manager

Attachment-Preliminary Schedule 2002 Events