

Memo



Date: Feb 23, 2011
File: 0610-53
To: City Manager
From: Don Backmeyer, Manager Sport & Facility Programs
Subject: BC Dragoon Centennial Celebration – May 13, 14, 15th, 2011

Recommendation:

THAT Council approves an expenditure of up to \$17,500.00 from Council Contingency to assist in the co-ordination of the BC Dragoon Centennial Exercise "Freedom of the City" as outlined in the Report from the Sport and Facility Programs Manager dated Feb 23, 2011.

AND THAT Council approves an expenditure of \$2,500.00 to host the Veendam Sister City Association during their weeklong visit to Kelowna and attendance at the BC Dragoons Centennial.

Purpose: To obtain funding approval from City Council towards the coordination of the BC Dragoon Centennial Celebration and related hosting of the Veendam Sister City Association.

Background:

"The Freedom of the City" is the highest award bestowed by the City of Kelowna, and is only awarded as a unanimous decision of City Council. It is an honorary designation that has been awarded infrequently since 1946. Reserved for individuals or organizations of exceedingly high merit, the Freedom of the City award recognizes outstanding community contributions of benefit to Kelowna. The British Columbia Dragoons were awarded "Freedom of the City" on February 11th, 1963.

The BC Dragoons Centennial offers the opportunity to re-establish the Freedom of the City in honour of their 100th Anniversary. This honour recognizes the history, sacrifice and commitment of the Regiment over the past 100 years and draws attention to their legacy in Kelowna and to the role they continue to play today. Through public and private events, a large number of military personnel will be in attendance, including youth. An event of this magnitude helps to educate residents within our region and province about the significance of the BC Dragoons and the special role they played in liberation activities during war time.

This event also helps to educate the community on why Kelowna has had such a unique Sister City relationship with Veendam, Holland for the past 30 years including annual student exchanges. To further educate children in our school district about the significance of our relationship with Veendam, a curriculum has been recently developed for elementary classes and several schools are building classroom to classroom relationships.

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The British Columbia Dragoons date their origins to the formation of the Okanagan Mounted Rifles in April 1908. Starting in Vernon, squadrons were established in Kelowna, Lumby and Armstrong. These were amalgamated on April 1st, 1911 as the 1st Regiment, British Columbia Horse, only to be re-designated the 30th British Columbia Horse some five months later.

In 1944, the Regiment deployed to Italy and played a prominent part in the advance north. In February 1945, the BCD and the rest of 1st Canadian Corps were re-deployed to Northwest Europe to join with 2nd Canadian Corps and took part in the liberation of the Netherlands. After a period of garrison duty in Europe the Regiment was repatriated to Canada in 1946 and resumed the status of a Reserve Armoured Regiment. The BCD earned 12 battle honours in the Second World War.

The BC Dragoons were among the first Allied troops to reach the community of Veendam in the Dutch province of Groningen during the Second World War. The Dragoons eventually liberated the town, and following the war a squadron of the Dragoons was billeted in the community. These military officers helped the community rebuild and worked with them to reconstruct the administrative capacity of the municipality. Although the troops soon returned to Canada, as early as 1950 Veendam asked several of the Dragoon veterans to return to the town for the fifth anniversary of VE Day. From 1950 through to 1980 many veterans returned to Veendam to join commemorative celebrations.

Events to Celebrate the Centennial

To commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the BC Dragoons, a number of activities are planned from May 11th to May 16th, 2011. We anticipate close to 200 military personnel to attend the events as well as a visiting delegation of 18 members from Kelowna's Sister City in Veendam, Holland. Public events will attract several thousand residents and visitors.

A reception will be held for the Veendam delegation on Wednesday May 11th followed by two days of meetings and tours of our community. The formal festivities celebrating the BC Dragoons Centennial will begin with a reception on Friday, May 13th at the Regimental headquarters in Kelowna.

On Saturday, May 14th a Regimental Parade and roll past in front of City Hall will begin the public event, "Centennial Exercise of the Freedom of the City of Kelowna" including a re-proclamation of the Regiments Freedom of the City by Mayor Sharon Shepherd. The 15th Field Artillery Band, RCA will march in the Regiment and provide music throughout the parade. The roll past will consist of BC Dragoon Regimental vehicles as well as historical military vehicles provided by both the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and the Western Command Historical Vehicle Association. Mounted Horseman depicting, the origins to the formation of the Okanagan Mounted Rifles in 1908, leading to the creation of the 1st Regiment on April 1st, 1911 will ride past as well.

To further commemorate the significance of the 100th anniversary, the BC Dragoons will present the City with a one ton marble statue entitled "Coming Home" which eventually will be placed in the Arrivals area at the Kelowna International Airport. Also, a Centennial Mural has been created and will be placed on the outside wall of the Memorial Arena, a formal dedication will occur immediately following the Centennial Exercise.

The City of Kelowna will host dignitaries at an afternoon reception in Memorial Arena. Up to 300 guests, dignitaries and military personnel are expected at this event. On Saturday evening the BC Dragoons will host a formal Centennial Dinner. On Sunday, May 15th attendees will be invited to a breakfast hosted at the Regiment followed by a special Remembrance Service to be held at St. Michael's and All Angels Church.

The weekend's activities will officially end on Monday, May 16th with a formal recognition of the BC Dragoons Centennial and presentation to City Council by the Veendam Sister City Association.

Internal Circulation: General Manager, Community Services; Director, Recreation & Cultural Services; Director, Financial Services; Director, Community & Media Relations; Grants Manager

Financial/Budgetary Considerations: The City will be applying for up to \$20,000.00 from Veterans Affairs – Community Engagement Partnership Fund to support the co-ordination of events which could mean less funding would be required from Council Contingency. Cost estimates are in the range of \$20,000 and include items such as –

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| • Event Planner | \$2800 |
| • Applicable fees, facility rental costs | \$1000 |
| • Parade – Freedom of the City costs | \$2200 |
| • Veendam delegation hosting | \$2500 |
| • Costs associated with "Coming Home" statue | \$5000 |
| • Costs for City Reception in Memorial Arena | \$5300 |
| • Contingency | \$1200 |

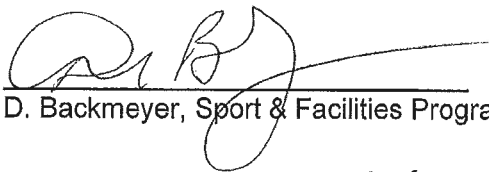
If the grant application to Veteran Affairs is successful, the funds required from Council contingency will be reduced. Amount of reduction will depend on grant funding received.

Council has an annual contingency budget of \$65,000 and \$4,500 has already been allocated from that budget for 2011 expenditures.

Considerations not applicable to this report:


Community & Media Relations
Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Existing Policy
Personnel Implications
External Agency/Public Comments
Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:



D. Backmeyer, Sport & Facilities Programs Manager

Approved for inclusion:



J. Gabriel, Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

cc: General Manager, Community Services
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
Director, Financial Services
Director, Community & Media Relations
Director, Strategic Initiatives