

Report from Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Director

Date of Report: November 2, 2016

Date of Meeting: November 14, 2016

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Subject: Corporate Policy – Waiving of Fees

Recommendation

That the Budget Standing Committee (BSC) approve the Waiving of Fees Policy; and

That the BSC direct staff to provide an upset limit of \$12,500 for 2017 and future years for waiving of fees; and

That staff monitor Council approved amounts; and

That BSC direct staff to provide an annual report to summarize all requests to waive fees and the amount of waived fees approved; and

FORTHWITH

Summary

Council approved Councillor Garcia's motion from July 11, 2016

That staff report back on whether a policy of waiving 50% of the fees for the first year of a non-for-profit event is an appropriate policy for all such cases.

Each year City receives a number of requests to waive City fees for events held at locations such as City parks, and recreation facilities and for road closures are received by Council. Staff has taken this opportunity to draft a corporate policy to assist Council with future waiving of fee requests.

Background

To date in 2016, the Council of the City of St. Catharines has waived in excess of \$13,000 in fees related to the costs of renting or permitting City property. The City also provided \$31,600 of value in kind to festivals and events held within the city limits and benefitting its residents.

Year	Event	Fees Waived	In Kind
2016	Niagara Wine Festival		\$7,300
	Niagara Folk Arts		\$4,300
	Niagara Integrated Film Festival		\$6,000
	Niagara VegFest		\$7,500
	Labour Day Parade		\$6,500
	Horticultural Society Annual Plant Sale	\$1,716	
	Jaycees Eater Egg Hunt	\$1,761	
	Twinning Association	\$78	
	Niagara Mental Health Comm.	\$128	
	Earth Day @ Market Square	\$150	
	DSBN Road Race	\$109	
	Grantham Lions Club Food Truck	\$730	
	Ice Dog Pep Rally	\$551	
	Rankin Cancer Run	\$1,722	
	Ramadan Dinner	\$200	
	Southridge Shelter BBQs	\$447	
	Facer Street European Festival	\$3,053	
	Wingfest	\$1,078	
	Walker's Creek Stargazing	\$83	
	Terry Fox Run	\$730	
	The Steve Ludzik Foundation	\$623	
	Total	\$13,159	\$31,600

Report

Each year, Council receives requests to waive City fees for the use of equipment and services such as park permits, City staffing, the showmobile, tables, chairs, road closures, cleaning supplies and services, ice time, room rentals and security. The requests vary in scope and resulting dollar value. The requests originate from service clubs, not for profit groups, and community groups, usually as part of fundraisers, festivals, performances, and other "special events". Council's direction to staff to compile data related to requests and approved amounts of waived fees from previous years will provide staff and Council with the data necessary to develop a corporate policy in order to allocate financial resources in an equitable and consistent manner. A draft of the waiving of fees policy is attached as Appendix 1.

In the attached policy staff is recommending that the upper limit to organizations for waiving of fees be 50% of Council approved fees for the use of the City's parks,

recreation centres and other assets, programs and services are outlined in the City's Rates and Fees document. There are often costs associated with the delivery, setup and take down of City equipment, as well as the reinstatement of parks once events are finished. In addition that applicants be limited to a maximum of two City fees waived for any given festival or event.

Financial Implications

Over the past five years Council has approved waived fees in the range of \$7,800 to \$16,400. Therefore staff has recommended an annual funding level for this purpose of \$12,500. Historically, waiving of fees have been funded by the Civic Project Fund (CPF) and staff recommends that this practice continue.

In 2016, Council approved the waiving of fees for the Rankin Cancer Run for the remainder of their term. This amount is approximately \$2,000 and will reduce the \$12,500 available for other organizations to \$10,500 for 2017 and 2018.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The Waiving of Fees Policy is related to the following Strategic Plan goals:

- Economic sustainability goal 2, to be an affordable city for young people, families and retired older adults
- Social sustainability goal 1, to strive for the highest quality of life for all citizens
- Cultural sustainability goal 3, to support cultural festivals and events that build civic pride, encourage local engagement and attract people to the community

Conclusion

The City has identified its need to support festivals and events that build civic pride, encourage local engagement and attract people to the community. The City must also allocate its financial resources in a responsible manner. The introduction of a policy which outline a process which provides an equitable allocation of financial resources, as well as a standardized application process will help the City and Council achieve both goals.

Notification

Staff be directed to notify all previous recipients of Council approved waived fees of the new Waiving of Fees Policy and that the policy be made available to the public immediately and that the deadlines be published on the City's website and other online assets.

Prepared and Submitted by:
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Recreation and Culture Services

Approved by:
Bryan Shynal, Commissioner of
Operations

City of St. Catharines Waiving of Fees Policy

OVERVIEW

The City of St. Catharines recognizes the importance of cultural events and events in that they build civic pride, encourage local engagement and attract people to the community and supporting them has been identified as a goal within the City of St. Catharines Strategic Plan.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to protect the City's corporate values, assets, interests, goals, facilities, programs and services while also ensuring that festivals and events grow and prosper, positively impacting the quality of life of St. Catharines residents.

POLICY STATEMENT

The City welcomes, supports and encourages cultural festivals and events that build civic pride, encourage local engagement and attract people to the community.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the City's support of festivals and events through the waiving of fees is facilitated in a fair and equitable manner and does not burden the City's annual operating budget.

WAIVING OF FEES

The City of St. Catharines will waive fees to eligible applicants to help offset the fee(s) that would have been charged by the City related to the delivery or presentation of a festival or event. Examples of City fees that can be waived are (but not limited to):

- Park permit
 - Rental of City Property
 - Staffing costs outside normal operations
1. **The maximum amount that the City of St. Catharines will waive is equal to 50% of the specific fee identified by the applicant.**
 2. **Applicants may request for a maximum of two City fees to be waived for any given festival or event.**
 3. **The approval of waived fees does not guarantee the availability of a reservation or equipment.**
 4. **City Council reserves the right to limit the total amount of fees waived annually.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Applicants must apply using the official application form to St. Catharines City Council and provide information relevant to the festival or event. The application must show the projected social, cultural, economic and environmental impact that the festival or event will have on the City of St. Catharines and its residents.
2. Preference will be given to applicants who display community building by creating partnerships with community organizations, arts and cultural organizations, athletic and social clubs, service clubs such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club and Optimist Club and charities.
3. Festivals or events that are similar to those already being provided by the City of St. Catharines will not be considered.
4. Festivals or events already funded through other agreements with the City of St. Catharines will not be considered.
5. Each year, City Council will approve a budget to be allocated to the Waiving of Fees.
6. Insurance fees and deposits are not eligible to be waived.
7. Organizations that are denied may appeal the decision by making a presentation to the Social Sustainability Committee (SSC). The SSC shall determine if the appeal can be referred to City Council for reconsideration.
8. City Council will approve applications by end of the current year for the next year and applicants will be notified by the City Clerk of any relevant decision.

WAIVING OF FEES PROCEDURE

1. Organizations who wish to apply for fees to be waived must do so by the application deadline of September 30th. Applications not received by the deadline will be denied. (The application deadline during the first year of this policy will be March 31.)
2. Applications must be submitted to the City Clerk's office.
3. Applications will be reviewed and prioritized by the Budget Standing Committee before being submitted to City Council for final approval.
4. Applicants must clearly identify the fee(s) being requested within the application form.

DEFINITIONS

City

The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines, including City Council.

City program

Any activity organized and/or operated by the City and supported by a City department or approved by City Council. Includes City events.

City Property

All properties and facilities owned, managed and/or controlled under a lease agreement or license by the City including, but not limited to, parkland, playing fields, arenas, community centres, pools, gardens, open space and boulevards, buildings and rooms, furniture, equipment and fixtures; vehicles, fleet vehicles; and bus shelters.

Fees

The cost, as identified in the City's Rates and Fees document to rent or permit a City owned asset. Fees are subject to change as directed by City Council.

Festival / Event

- A single or multi day activity offering inclusive experiences to a wide range of participants.
- Examples include, but are not limited to: fundraisers, community presentations and carnivals

RESTRICTIONS

The City will not solicit or accept applications from organizations whose reputation could prove detrimental to the City's public image and/or whose main business is derived from:

- The sale of tobacco
- Pornography
- The support of or involvement in the production, distribution and sale of guns, ammunition and other life-threatening weapons