

Report from Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Business Planning and Strategic Services

Date of Report: August 2, 2017

Date of Meeting: August 28, 2017

Report Number: PRCS-B037-2017

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Subject: Sport Tourism Grant Program

Recommendation

That Budget Standing Committee (BSC) receive this report for information.

Summary

This report provides a review on the City's previous Sport Tourism Grant program (STG) in response to the request from the Budget Standing Committee; and summarizes the City's support to date for events without the STG in place.

Background

On June 19th, 2017 Councillor Britton, through the Budget Standing Committee, requested a report on the City's previous Sport Tourism Grant program.

In 2015, the STG was added to the Operating Budget reduction list to meet budget targets; and this reduction was subsequently approved by the BSC. Following this, only two inquiries regarding the loss of the program were received by staff.

Report

The STG was established and approved by Council as an economic development initiative / policy in late 2007 to incentivize and encourage sporting event organizers to promote and develop sport events that attract overnight visitation to the City of St. Catharines. In the fall of 2014, the program was transferred from Economic Development to Parks, Recreation and Culture Services.

STG development, purpose, intake and economic impact

The City played host to several existing tournaments prior to the STG though it was apparent that while the City's facilities were being used for sport events, many event participants were not staying in the community. While being mindful of the amount of available accommodation in the City, and the proximity of popular destinations like Niagara Falls – the STG was developed as an incentive for tournament organizers to drive visitation to the City. Consequently, specific eligibility criteria was developed and approved requiring 40% of all participants of an event to stay overnight in St. Catharines.

The purpose of the STG program had three goals:

- Drive more traffic to St. Catharines
- Grow the number of overnight stays in the community
- Increase visitor expenditures

Since inception of STG in 2007, staff processed sixty-two (62) successful applications to over approximately seven and a half years.

Using the Sport Tourism Economic Impact Assessment Model (STEAM) the table below summarizes the economic impacts to St. Catharines between inception in 2007 and its last year of funding in 2014.

Events (2007- 2014)	Grants Disbursed	Rental Revenue*	Initial Visitor Expenditure	GDP	Wages/Employment Supported
62	\$193,319	\$1,061,553	\$17,894,166	\$12,959,307	\$8,594,899

*11 events were in private facilities and 51 events generated rental income for the City.

Absence of STG

The grant program's last year of funding was in 2014; since that time staff received only two inquiries regarding the loss of the program. In absence of the grant program, Council has continually supported the fee waiver requests for signature events held in St. Catharines.

City signature event support

Event	Facility Waiver Investment	Capital Facility Investment	Economic Impact
2016: IIHF Women's World Juniors	Approx.\$35, 000	\$0	est. \$4M
2017: Scotties Tournament of Hearts	\$140,000	\$0	TBD
2018: FIBA	\$ 65, 200	\$0	est. \$4 M
2021: Canada Summer Games	\$ 303,024	\$1,081,000	est. \$200 + M
TOTAL	\$544, 060	\$1,081,000	

Impact on facility usage

The number of tournaments and special events has fluctuated between 21 and 30 per season with a maximum variance of 6 between any two seasons and a variance of 4 when comparing 2007/08 season. There were 21 tournaments and special events held in 2016/17, where 25 tournaments and special events were held.

Alternative funding opportunities for smaller sport events

On [June 12th](#), Council approved the recommendations from the Social Sustainability Committee with respect to special events waiving of fees. Council approved to increase the 2017 budget for waiving of fees from \$12,500 to \$16,417.83 and that the additional funds, in the amount of \$3,917.83 come from the Civic Project Fund; and

At its meeting on November 14, 2016, the Budget Standing Committee approved a new corporate Waiving of Fees Policy (Policy) for special event organizers. This policy would allow special event organizers to apply for up to 50% of approved fees for the use of City recreation facilities and other assets, programs and services as outlined in the City's Rates and Fees by-law.

To date, Council has approved the following event fee waivers:

Amount of fees (50%) to be waived in 2017 for current applicants:	\$8,066.82
Amount of fees (100%) to be waived for events pre-approved by Council:	<u>\$8,351.00</u>
Total amount of fees waived in 2017:	<u>\$16,417.82</u>

The intent of the Policy is to help offset the fee(s) for eligible applicants that would have been charged by the City related to the delivery or presentation of a festival or event. Applicants may request for a maximum of two City fees to be waived for any given festival or event. Examples of City fees that can be waived are (but not limited to): Park permit, rental of City Property and Staffing outside normal operations. In the policy, City Property is defined as all properties and facilities owned, managed and/or controlled under a lease 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.

According to the General Principles of the Policy the following are within parameters to grant athletic organizations the ability to apply for funding:

1. Applicants must apply using the official application form and provide information relevant to the festival or event. The application must show the projected social, cultural, and 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.

Waiving of Fees Procedure:

1. Organizations who wish to apply for fees to be waived must do so by the advertised application deadline. Applications not received by the deadline will be denied.
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.

Promotion to date for user group and future promotion

Since Council's adoption of the Waiving of Fees Corporate Policy in early 2017, the opportunity was communicated through City website and press release. Staff have identified additional means for promotion when the 2018 intake commences to ensure that user groups and the greater community are aware of the opportunity. Future promotion of the waiving of fees program will be through city website, social channels, news release, and an electronic communication to current user groups.

Financial Implications

When in place, the STG was budgeted at \$30,000 annually as part of the Operating Budget. Reinstating the STG would result in an increase expenditure of \$30,000 annually.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The City's financial, including in-kind, support of sport events, whether through the former STG or in response to individual requests, supports the economic, social and cultural sustainability goals of the Strategic Plan. This support provides the ability to host events in St. Catharines that draw the community together, encourages local engagement and investment as well as attracting new visitors to the community to enjoy, support, and grow our local economy.

Conclusion

The City of St. Catharines recognizes the importance sports events as generators of economic and legacy benefit for the community. The Sport Tourism Grant program was a structured format to fund sport events. That funding advanced the City's goals related to economic development and tourism, sport development, healthy living, and resident engagement and cultural celebration.

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