



RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TO: Council
DATE: September 21, 2021 **DIVISION:** All
FILE: N/A **APPLICATION:** N/A
SUBJECT: Discussion: Special Events Bylaw C-7990-2020

POLICY DIRECTION:

At the August 3, 2021, Recreation Governance Committee Meeting, the Committee directed Administration to bring the Special Events Bylaw C-7990-2020 to Council for discussion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Special Events Bylaw C-7990-2020, which was approved by Council in February 2020, is intended to support a streamlined special event process, while ensuring legislative requirements are met to ensure safe and enjoyable events in the community.

In the summer of 2019, the County recognized the need to design a coordinated approach for special events as the current process was managed under a 15 year old bylaw that no longer met the needs of the community.

The County recognizes that organized special events add to the fabric and quality of life for County residents, and therefore, Administration focused on a coordinated one-point-of-contact process that incorporates a standardized criteria that achieves public safety and legislative requirements to meet Council’s strategic objectives.

Administration has thus far informally reached out to applicants to receive feedback on the process and is looking to embark on a survey to collect information using an impartial approach.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends that the report be received for information, in accordance with Option #1.

BACKGROUND:

Rocky View County is committed to supporting special events as identified in Council’s strategic objectives of Creating a Culture of Customer Service, Enhancing Communication, and Expanding Community Service Delivery.

In the summer of 2019, Administration began researching a made-in-Rocky View approach through initiating conversations with 17 municipalities across Canada, County businesses, 19 community groups, and 15 internal departments. These conversations identified best practices throughout Canada, as well as gaps and successes with the then-current County special event process.

In meeting with community groups, key gaps were identified:

- No formal special event definition;
- No formalized process;
- Too many different departments to deal with;
- Too many permits needed;
- Not able to complete required legislative requirements – do not have expertise.



Consequently, the existing Concert Bylaw, C-5949-2004, no longer met the needs of the community. When the bylaw was approved in 2004, it spoke to a threshold of 1,500 attendees before a special event permit was required, which encompassed less than 3% of all special events within the County. Administration wanted to explore a special event approach that was consistent in requirements, yet met the diversified special event spectrum that occurs in the County.

In 2019, there were 40 special events in the County. These special events ranged from large events, such as Wings Over Springbank, to smaller events such as the Langdon Walk and Run. Depending on the magnitude, location, and complexity of the event, there may be numerous departments involved in identifying safety and legislative requirements. The challenge with that process was that event organizers were required to deal directly with each department, and each department had a unique set of requirements.

Additionally, Administration embarked on developing a more seamless, citizen-centric approach to support event organizers with their special events. The County's service delivery approach for special events includes:

- Defined Special Events:
 - Temporary or annual one-time activity that takes place on private or public land.
- The development of the Special Event Advisory Technical Team (SEATT), which is an internal team that identifies legislative and safety requirements to ensure safe events.
- A one-point-of-contact approach for event organizers:
 - Each event has one primary contact at the County that will work with internal departments to identify the legislative and safety requirements and work with the event organizers to achieve those requirements.
 - The one-point-of-contact approach ensures the same information is shared with the internal departments and the event organizer.
- A formalized, documented process that reduces red tape for the event organizer;
- A dedicated webpage that has quick links to documents:
 - A fillable application form;
 - Reference guides that have quick links;
 - Fillable templates, such as an Emergency Action Plan; and
 - Quick reference information, such as tent permit requirements.
- A neighbourhood notification requirement that includes:
 - Notification on the County's Safe and Sound alert program; and
 - 30 day advance notification by the event organizer

Administration also identified three levels of special events, with each level having a consistent process. The three levels of events are:

- Large events such as parades, festivals, concerts, and circuses;
- Medium events such as rodeos, road races, farmers' markets, filming productions; and
- Neighbourhood or community events such as block parties, birthday parties, and weddings.

As part of the implementation process, the County's special event process needed to be established by bylaw. As such, Administration prepared a bylaw for Council's consideration that was approved in February 2020. The Bylaw was designed to achieve the following:

- Define the three levels of special events;
- Provide for the permitting and regulation of special events held in the County;
- Identify co-responsibilities for both Rocky View County and the Event Organizers;
- Exempt Rocky View County and Rocky View Schools from the process, if the event occurs on land controlled or owned by each respective government body;
- Exempt non-profit and schools from permit fees; and
- Provide a mechanism to enforce the special event process.



Administration embarked on testing the new process through 2020 and 2021. Over 80 events have been vetted under the new process; however, due to COVID, only 60 events were completed under the new process. With each application, Administration reached out to event organizers to obtain feedback on their experience with the new process. Four key questions were asked in relation to communication, response time, ease of process, and support and guidance. Administration asked that each category be rated from 1 to 10, 10 being the best. The following are the results of this unofficial performance survey:

- Communication = 9.8
- Response Time = 9.7
- Ease of Process = 9.0
- Support and Guidance = 9.0

The majority of comments on the new approach were favorable, particularly in relation to the one-point-of-contact approach. Administration did receive some suggestions for improvement with regard to permitting, and Administration is continually working on streamlining our permitting process while respecting legislative requirements.

In 2021, with the opening of restrictions, the County has received over 40 special event applications. Administration will again reach out to all applicants to obtain their customer service experience on the special event process.

As this process continues to evolve and the number of special event requests within the County continues to increase, Administration is looking to embark on a satisfaction survey to ensure that information is collected using an impartial approach. The survey results and any recommendations to changes to the process will be brought forward to Council in the first quarter of 2022.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

There are no budget implications associated with this report. Current funding is available for any survey to be undertaken.

OPTIONS:

- Option #1 THAT the Discussion: Special Events Bylaw report be received for information.
- Option #2 THAT alternative direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

“Brock Beach”

“Kent Robinson”

Acting Executive Director
Community Development Services

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment ‘A’ – Bylaw C-7990-2020
Attachment ‘B’ – Special Event Reference Guide
Attachment ‘C’ – Small Event Reference Guide