



RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TO: Council
DATE: May 10, 2022 **DIVISION:** All
FILE: N/A **APPLICATION:** N/A
SUBJECT: Special Events Process - Update

POLICY DIRECTION:

At the September 21, 2021, meeting, Council directed Administration to hold workshops with Council, the community, and business organizations on the current special event permit process and bring a report back to Council by the end of April 2022.

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.

As directed in September 2021, Administration was to hold workshops with Council, the community, and business organizations on the special event permit process. To be COVID respectful, and to ensure the process was independent and impartial, Administration worked with HarGroup Management Consultants to design a survey to gather input and feedback from event organizers about the special event permit process. Each event organizer who organized an event in the last two years was sent an independent survey to complete. If additional information was requested by either the consultant or the applicant, the consultant reached out directly to the applicant for a further conversation.

Event organizers began submitting their applications for the 2022 event season in January, and as COVID restrictions did not lift until the beginning of March, this did not allow Administration enough time to go into the community to facilitate workshops on changes implemented in the process. As of March, there are currently over 20 events being processed.

Based on the survey findings and community outreach results, Administration made some procedural changes, and those changes will be tested throughout the 2022 event season. Then, based on the feedback from this year's events, the process changes and any required Bylaw amendments will be presented to the community, business organizations, and then Council, later in the fall of this year.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends approval of an extension to the timeline, 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.



Event organizers who held events in Rocky View County in 2020 and 2021 were contacted by HarGroup Management Consultants who administered the survey to 32 unique event organizers who represented a total of 63 events. A total of 20 individuals completed the survey, and two qualitative interviews were conducted to gather feedback on five main categories:

- Application timelines;
- Ease of process;
- Information & communication;
- One point of contact;
- Processes to address legislative and safety requirements.

In addition to the online survey, HarGroup conducted follow-up phone calls to the 32 organizers who completed the survey to gather any potential additional qualitative feedback. Based on the results of the special events survey and to create a more streamlined process, Administration made changes to our internal event process that do not impact the current Bylaw. These changes are in place for the 2022 event season, and based on feedback from our event organizers thereafter, Administration is proposing to bring updates on the process and any potential Bylaw amendments to Council in the fall of 2022.

Results of the survey identify key areas that organizers enjoyed about the special event process:

- One point of contact:
 - Survey results showed that the majority of organizers preferred having a one point of contact approach when applying for a special event permit.
- Easily accessible information:
 - Survey results showed that the majority of organizers found information on how to apply for a special event permit was accessible via the Rocky View County website, and that the reference guides outlined event requirements appropriately and was easy to understand.

Results of the survey identified the following key areas of improvement:

- Length of application form.
- Confusion on the definitions of what is a small, medium, or large event.
- Redundancy of having to submit similar documents each year if event hasn't changed in scope.
- Obtaining required documentation for additional permits (i.e.: supporting documents required to obtain a building permits for temporary tent structures).

Based on the survey results, Administration is piloting changes to the process that include:

- Application Form:
 - Application has been streamlined to two pages, and we are working to develop an online, auto-fill, webform application.
- Document Requirements/Submission:
 - If there are no changes to annual events, documents from the previous year can be used for the current year's event. This is less time consuming for the applicant, which further streamlines the process.
- Conditional permit approval:
 - We are working with Building and Transportation Services on options to streamline requirements that commensurate with provincial legislation requirements.

As 2021 was a unique year due to COVID restrictions, event organizers were unable to submit their applications with the standard timeline of 120 days, resulting in Administration processing 53 unique events in a 10-week period. As restrictions have lifted provincially, this has allowed event organizers to submit their applications and supporting documentation far in advance of the 120-day requirement. This permits a more strategic and thorough review from our internal team, therefore allowing a



conditional approval of their event earlier in the process. Conditional approvals give more flexibility for organizers to advertise and sell tickets as needed.

As the 2022 event season is underway, Administration is currently testing the above procedural changes and requests an extension to December 31, 2022, to present feedback and any recommended amendments to the Bylaw for Council’s consideration.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

There are no budget implications associated with this report.

OPTIONS:

- Option #1 THAT Administration be granted an extension to December 31, 2022, to present a report on the Special Events processes and any proposed amendments to Bylaw C-7990-2020 for Council’s consideration.
- Option #2 THAT alternative direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

“Brock Beach”

“Byron Riemann for Dorian Wandzura”

Acting Executive Director
Community Development Services

Chief Administrative Officer

CC/rp