

Subject: Downtown BIA Harvest Festival and Downtown Cruise Night

To: Council

From: Chief Administrative Office

Report Number: 2021-228

Meeting Date: September 13, 2021

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-228 be received; and

That Council approves the following road closures for the Downtown Cruise Nights on Thursday, September 23, 2021 and Thursday September 30, 2021:

- Clarence Street from the western limit of King Street to the eastern limit of Catherine Street; and
- Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte Street;
- The City to provide the road barricades and assist with the road closures.

That Council approves the following road closures for Harvest Fest on Saturday, September 25, 2021:

- Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte street.

That council approves the following support for Harvest Fest:

- Waiver of the \$83.20 fee for use of King George Park and access to hydro;
 - The City to provide road barricades and assist with the road closures;
 - Provide 10 large pylons;
 - Provide additional garbage bins at King George Park;
 - Ensure the Harbour Master Building Washrooms are open for the public.
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Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present a request to Council from the Port Colborne Downtown Business Improvement Area Board of Management (Downtown BIA). The Downtown BIA is requesting road closures to host the “Harvest Fest” event as well as two Downtown Cruiser’s Cruise nights on City Streets.

Background:

The proposed Cruise Night will operate from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 23, 2021 and Thursday, September 30, 2021. Due to construction occurring on West Street north of Clarence Street in September, the traditional footprint for the cruise nights will have to be altered. The new proposed footprint will be the following:

- Clarence Street from the western limit of King Street to the eastern limit of Catherine Street; and
- Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte Street;
- The City will need to provide road barricades to assist with closing of the roads at 5:00 p.m. for each event.

The Cruise nights are going to use a pre-registration system. Classic vehicle entrants must pre-register and then they will be assigned a spot to park. In the event that classic vehicles show up with out registering, the Market Square parking lot can be used as overflow to accommodate these vehicles. Each parking spot will be spaced by at least 6 feet to ensure proper distancing. Volunteers will be on-site to ensure that event goers are following COVID-19 protocols and are not gathering in large groups. The Downtown Cruisers are also requesting that an entertainer named “COVID Elvis” play music in King George Park for the duration of the event. The Downtown BIA will be sanctioning this event.

The proposed Harvest Fest event will operate in the evening on Friday, September 24, 2021 and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Saturday, September 25, 2021. On Friday, September 24, the event will consist of local restaurants and business offering Harvest Fest specials and hosting local entertainment at their own establishments. Below is the proposed Harvest Fest itinerary for Saturday, September 25, 2021.

- Market Square will be left open for parking.
- Closure of Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte Street to host 20 artisan vendors.
- Port Cares parking lot will host entertainers and 10 vendors.
- Mariner’s park will host entertainers and 10 vendors.
- Buskers to be located in various locations on West Street, Clarence Street, and Charlotte Street.

- Artistic vendors to be located at St. James & St. Brendan Church.
- Use of King George Park for vendors.
- Downtown Businesses to host sidewalk sales.
- Downtown Restaurants to promote festival specials.

The Downtown BIA has indicated that in order to enforce and control COVID protocols and social distancing measures, they will be hiring security guards to monitor the event spaces. The Downtown BIA has also indicated they will have a team of 3-4 volunteers at each event location to assist with controlling crowds and ensuring proper social distancing is taking place.

The Downtown BIA is requesting the following support from the City:

- Reach out and alert emergency services of the event;
- Approval of road closure of Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte Street;
- Waive the \$83.20 fee for use of King George Park and access to hydro;
- Provide road barricades and assist with the closure of Catherine Street;
- Provide 10 large pylons;
- Provide additional garbage bins at King George Park;
- Ensure the Harbour Master building washrooms are open for the duration of the event.

Discussion:

City event staff have discussed the proposed events with the Downtown BIA and later presented the proposed event to the City's Emergency Control Group (ECG). The ECG has raised concerns on the potential liability and negative public image around having events with road closures and potential large gatherings due to the growing COVID-19 numbers throughout Ontario and the Niagara Region. The ECG has also indicated that the City's By-law Enforcement capacity limits the availability for City staff to be on-site enforcing social distancing guidelines and COVID-19 protocols at the events. This responsibility will fall onto the Downtown BIA through the use of security personnel and event volunteers.

The ECG will continue to monitor the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the province, region, and City of Port Colborne after this Council meeting to ensure that it is still safe to host this event if this report is approved. If the province reduces the current gathering limits in Ontario or COVID-19 cases continue to rise in the Niagara Region, the ECG will consider cancelling the portion of the event that is occurring on City property.

Internal Consultations:

Staff have consulted with the ECG, the ECG has provided the following comments:

The Emergency Control Group supports a safe and gradual recovery from the economic impact of the pandemic on businesses in Port Colborne and supports the BIA in the Harvest Fest and Cruise Night initiatives. The ECG notes that, while Ontario is in Step 3 of the provincial recovery framework, case numbers in Ontario are high and COVID variants are prevalent. The ECG strongly encourages the BIA to institute and monitor COVID precautions to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved in these events.

Financial Implications:

The Downtown BIA is not requesting any funding for this event. They are however requesting that we waive the \$83.20 fee for the use of King George Park and access to hydro.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Attracting Business Investment and Tourists to Port Colborne
 - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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Conclusion:

In conclusion, staff are looking for direction from Council on whether or not the City should approve the Downtown Cruise nights and Harvest Fest proceeding on City property. If Council does wish to give approval for the road closures, the ECG will continue to monitor the impact COVID-19 is having in the province, region, and in Port Colborne. If the case numbers continue to rise or the provincial government retracts the current gathering limits that are in the place, the ECG may decide to cancel the event from occurring on City property.

The following is being requested for the Downtown Cruise nights on Thursday, September 23 and Thursday, September 30, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.:

- Clarence Street from the western limit of King Street to the eastern limit of Catherine Street; and

- Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte Street;
- The City to provide the road barricades and assist with the road closures.

The following is being requested for Harvest Fest on Saturday, September 25, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.:

- Closure of Catherine Street from the southern limit of Clarence Street to the northern limit of Charlotte street to host 20 artisan vendors;
- Waive the \$83.20 fee for use of King George Park and access to hydro;
- The City to provide road barricades and assist with the road closures;
- Provide 10 large pylons;
- Provide additional garbage bins at King George Park;
- Ensure the Harbour Master Building Washrooms are open for the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Rowe
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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.