



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 15, 2016
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Meeting Date: November 29, 2016

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Community Services
SUBJECT: New Year's Eve Celebration Funding

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve a grant of up to \$50,000 to the Vancouver New Year's Eve Celebration Society to support the 2016/17 New Year's Eve celebration. Funding for the grant will be managed through the approved 2016 Operating budget.

The recommendation comprises a grant and requires eight affirmative votes for approval.

REPORT SUMMARY

Public New Year's Eve (NYE) celebrations are held in major cities worldwide. These events provide economic opportunity to the tourism and event industries in what is typically a "low season". The not-for-profit Vancouver New Year's Eve Celebration Society (VNYECS), made up of tourism and business stakeholders, is providing the City an opportunity to support and contribute to a professional, sustainable annual New Year's Eve event that will allow residents and visitors to take part in a family-friendly, free celebration and fireworks exhibition.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On November 17, 2015, Council approved (RTS 11202) a grant of up to \$125,000 to the VNYECS to support the NYE celebration. The source of funding was the 2015 Operating budget.

On June 1, 2016, via the 2016 Community Cultural Grants allocations (RTS 11373) the VNYECS was awarded \$8,000 for the annual NYE public celebrations and festivities in

the City to foster tradition and instil a sense of shared identity and civic pride within the community.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The VNYECS was established out of arising public demand to host a major, free outdoor celebration to ring in the New Year in Vancouver. The inaugural 2015/16 celebrations exceeded expectations with crowds of over 80,000 for midnight fireworks making this the largest NYE Celebration in Canada. Based on a survey conducted by Eventcorp Survey for VNYESC on December 31, 2015; the following were some noteworthy findings:

- Estimated Attendance: Over 80,000
- Television Audience: 1.2 Million
- Attendees agree event makes Vancouver a better place to visit, live, or work: 8 out of 10
- Average household income: \$61,000
- Male to female: 45% to 55%
- Average age: 33 years
- Guest have attended post-secondary education: 84%
- Guests are from Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley area: 83%
- Employed or self-employed: 2 out of 3

The VNYECS has Board representatives from Buzz Connected Media (Daily Hive), Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, Tourism Vancouver, Boughton Law Corporation, Amanda James Company, BDO Canada, Vanterre Projects Corp. and Starbucks Coffee. VNYECS has taken considerable steps to create an investment-attractive and sustainable product. The acquisition of media partners such as Global, Metro, 93.7 JRfm and 102.7 The Peak radio stations offer a significant incentive to other sponsors to attach themselves to the project. The event production company, brand.LIVE, is a reputable, experienced event producer responsible for many annual events including Celebration of Light and Canada Day at Canada Place.

An event application has been submitted to the City's Film and Special Event Branch. Festival Expediting Staff Team (FEST) meetings have been held with the event's contracted producers. An Advanced Planning Unit (APU) meeting has been held, where the City's Emergency Operations and Engineering Staff, emergency agencies, society representatives and event producers discussed communication, crowd control and other public safety plans.

Strategic Analysis

The 2016/17 NYE event will not only build on the success of the inaugural year, but also add additional programming to create a more animated street festival experience from Harbour Green park all the way to Canada Place. The expanded outdoor programming will once again incorporate a main music stage, with the addition of a second stage, lighting and multi-media installations along an expanded site that includes more sponsor activations and roaming performers to keep crowds entertained throughout the night.

In 2017, Canada will celebrate its 150th year celebrations. Building on the tremendous success of the inaugural event, VNYECS will usher in this milestone year with a fun, family-friendly evening of music, entertainment and fireworks on Vancouver's waterfront. Canada150 – New Year's Eve Celebration will be a time for citizens to connect, celebrate and show pride from coast to coast and a chance to deepen and expand the sense of what it means to be Canadian, to discover untapped potential, create lasting connections and build community legacies long after 2017 has ended.

Similar to last year, the City's investment would be made in a relatively risk-reduced product that will encourage economic growth and community engagement. However, given the added element of Canada150 to the celebrations, it is difficult to predict public response to this event; neither City staff nor its emergency responder partner agencies can provide a completely reliable estimate regarding the number of attendees and/or the potential for public disorder. The City is, therefore, requiring the event to provide, and if needed, implement a robust safety plan; a plan that requires the event organizers to contract costly personnel and services. It is not, however, the City's intent to increase the event's risk and safety budget to the detriment of the event's programming capability. The financial contribution from the City will allow adequate safety personnel and equipment to be in place without causing significant impact to the event experience.

Typically, festivals such as New York City's Time Square Celebrations are subsidized by cities in the first couple years. Once the event is safely and sustainably executed and the product becomes more attractive to private sector funders, reliance on city financing diminishes.

Although the VNYECS has almost attained the targeted level of financial and in-kind sponsorship to mount the event on December 31, 2016, they still need and have requested additional financial support from the City. The financial contribution from the City will allow adequate safety personnel and equipment to be in place without causing significant impact to the event experience.

Given the remarkable success and safe execution of the 2015/16 event, Staff recommend supporting the VNYESC 2016/17 celebration for one additional year and at a reduced amount - from \$125,000 to \$50,000. Hence forth, the VNYESC will follow the available (and potentially new) funding processes available to all City events.

Financial

This report recommends a grant of up to \$50,000. Funding for the grant will be managed through the approved 2016 Operating budget. As of October 26, 2016, the total events budget for the 2016/17 celebration is \$650,000.

CONCLUSION

Financial support for the New Year's Eve event will help provide a safe, barrier-free celebratory experience for Vancouver's residents and visitors. Such events, when strategically cultivated, have the potential to become a signature experience that helps define the reputations and appeal of the cities in which they take place.

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