

MOTION

9. Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals & Events in Vancouver (Member's Motion B.6)

At the Council meeting on July 19, 2022, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on July 20, 2022, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. Outdoor festivals and events give people the opportunity to join together and enjoy our locals arts, culture and celebrations, adding fun and vibrancy to city life;
2. The ability to gather and connect socially outdoors has become even more valued as a result of the pandemic;
3. Groups and organizations wanting to host outdoor festivals in the City of Vancouver, on a street, sidewalk, or plaza, are required to apply for approval;
4. The focus of event approvals is to ensure that events are safe and don't negatively affect the community, but in recent years it has become increasingly challenging for festivals and events to navigate the City's permitting processes. Event hosts typically find the City's regulations to be unwieldy and it takes an undue length of time before a permit can be successfully obtained. Some improvements are being made this year with the adoption of the Special Events Policy, but more streamlining and simplification is needed and will be beneficial to supporting local arts and culture in the city;
5. Costs for festivals and events have also been increasing due to increasing policing costs and safety requirements, making it difficult for established festivals to sustain and difficult for new and smaller events to be staged;
6. For events held in a Vancouver park, the oversight for granting approval falls to the Vancouver Park Board. The Vancouver Park Board currently has a moratorium on issuing permits for corporate events in parks, resulting in tourism operators taking client groups to other municipalities to hold conferences or events for visiting client;
7. There is a shortage of venues for local, live music for the public to enjoy and for local musicians to play small, pop-up events; and
8. Festivals and events are key contributors to Vancouver's economic health, generating jobs and tax revenue.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back in Q2, 2023 on options for a more

streamlined Festivals and Events permitting process to reduce the amount of time it takes to issue permits by reducing the complexity of applications and giving consideration to separate permitting streams for smaller and larger events, with a special focus on reducing barriers for music and arts related events, and consideration to having one event policy that spans both public and private property to help reduce red tape;

FURTHER THAT the report back should include any recommended improvements and updates to the City's Special Events Policy and any associated guidelines.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to engage with the VPD to review opportunities to reduce on-site policing requirements and costs borne by organizers while still maintaining regard for public safety, including the possible increased use of private security and/or other measures to combat the increasing safety costs impacting the viability of public festivals and events.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to convene an Advisory Task Force comprised of a range of representatives and stakeholders from Vancouver's Festival and Events sector including small and large event organizers, cultural and music sector stakeholders, and groups such as business improvement associations, in order to help identify key challenges and opportunities with the current festivals and events permitting processes, and that the engagement and feedback gathered help inform the above-noted report back.

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