

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND CULTURE

DESCRIPTION

Re: 2022 Drag Races Summary Report / Direction for 2023

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report of the Director of Recreation and Culture re. the 2022 drag races be received

AND THAT the Recreation and Culture Standing Committee recommend to Council to provide direction to staff on hosting the Drag Races event in 2023 based on the options provided

BACKGROUND

The Drag Races is an annual event that takes place at the Elliot Lake Airport every third weekend in July. The event offers an opportunity for drivers to race their vehicles and for spectators to attend to watch and support drivers. This event draws participants from all over Canada and spectators from across Ontario. The event also sees local races and supporters. The Drag Races provided an opportunity for service groups to volunteer and local businesses to act as vendors at the event.

ANALYSIS

The 2022 Drag Races was the 21st event held and the first event after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The 2022 event drew a large spectator crowd, mostly on the Saturday of the event.

The Drag Races is a large event that requires a significant amount of staff time, wages and equipment towards making it successful. In order to make any future events successful, staff require direction from Council on how they suggest we move forward with this event. See options below on how the City of Elliot Lake could participate in a 2023 Drag Races at the Elliot Lake Airport:

Option A: run the event the same as 2022 by having a mix of staff and volunteers run the event. There was limited number of volunteers from service groups available or offering to assist with this event so more paid staff time was required to successfully host this event (an effort can be made to secure more volunteers in 2023 but their use will only help to some degree).

Option B: Offer the use of the Elliot Lake Airport to a 3rd party organization, business or service group at nominal cost and allow them to run the event using limited assistance and resources (enough to protect the municipal assets and the city from liability). If no one steps forward to run the event by a certain date (yet to be determined), staff move forward with the event as per option A.

Option C: same as option B but if no one steps forward to run the event by a certain date, the 2023 event will be cancelled.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2022 Drag Races was budgeted for a total cost of \$35,000*. The actual cost of the event was \$36,650.

For further breakdowns of the budget and finances, please refer to the attached document provided by the municipal Treasurer.

* - traditionally costs of salaried employees of the city are not charged directly to the event (or at least the approach re. city staff wages has varied over the years). The \$35k budgeted loss was not including any staff time or equipment costs charged to the event.

In 2022, staff made an extra effort to track all the “in-kind / distributed wages” and equipment usage related to the event. If those costs were attributed to the event, the event would show a net loss of over \$120k. This could be interpreted as an opportunity cost while PWs and significant management and

CUPE staff are focused on a massive effort at the airport in the middle of a short and busy summer construction season. These “in-kind” costs are outlined in the attached breakdown from treasury.

Staff is concerned that the impact to the local economy from the event is not consistent with the massive amount of effort and hence cost to the local taxpayer.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This event aligns with the City’s Strategic Plan through:

- Support the local business community

SUMMARY

The 2022 Drag Races was run successfully by staff of the City of Elliot Lake and local volunteers.

Direction for the 2023 Drag Races is required as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to explore alternate approaches and/or ramp up sponsorship efforts.