



# MEMO

**To: Council**  
**From: Daniel Gagnon**  
**Date: February 23, 2023**  
**Subject: 2023 Drag Races Update**

---

In December 2022, the following motion of the Recreation and Culture Standing Committee was passed:

That the report from the Director of Recreation and Culture re. The 2022 drag races be received  
And that staff bring back a report recommending option B as amended to a future meeting of Council.

The amended option B reads as such:

Option B: Offer the use of the Elliot Lake Airport to a 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.~~

Staff reached out to various organizations and have seen no appetite locally to take over the event in the capacity laid out in the staff report from December 2022. That said, recent discussions with the organizers of the Kirkland Lake races may prove interesting but have not yet yielded any concrete results. We were planning to return to Council in March pending the latest updates from Kirkland Lake.

In the interim, the traditional vendor for providing the race timing equipment is Lusville Dragway from Aylmer, Quebec (at a typical cost of \$31,000). They have booked another race in Chapeau on Elliot Lake's traditional 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in July. That effectively means the typical drag race weekend in Elliot Lake cannot proceed.

The Kirkland Lake races are hosted in a similar fashion as laid out in option B of the Dec 2022 staff report. The local non-profit organization made up of racers and car enthusiasts rents the municipal airport for a modest fee and very modest municipal support and has over the years made a small profit or broken-even and has acquired their own timing equipment for the races, effectively removing the need to contract Lusville to host the races.

Of course council can direct administration in any given direction, but staff is of the firm belief that the level of effort, cost to the taxpayer and risk is not commensurate with the modest benefit to the community. Until such time as a group can mobilize sufficient volunteer resources to host the drag races in a more cost effective manner for the municipal ratepayers, the event should not proceed.

This memo was intended as an interim update based on the timing of the recent announcement of a Chapleau race in July.

Subject to updated information from Kirkland Lake by Monday evening, Council has a few options:

- determine it has enough information now and pass a motion to cancel the races and book the savings in the 2023 municipal budget or
- wait for more research and defer this to the March 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting or an Ad Hoc 2023 Budget Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Gagnon