



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner of Community Services

Meeting Date: March 8, 2021

Subject: Report CSAD21-004
Peterborough Memorial Centre Drive-In Event Opportunities

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Drive-In Events held at the Peterborough Memorial Centre (PMC) in 2020 and request Council approval to proceed with similar event opportunities in the summer of 2021.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSAD21-004 dated March 8, 2021 of the Commissioner of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That staff proceed with the Drive-In Event Stage plans as described in Report CSAD21-004 for 2021 Drive-In Event opportunities;
- b) That staff continue to work with community partner organizations to maximize the usage of the stage and to ensure recovery of the City's costs; and

Budget and Financial Implications

The Drive-In Event Stage Plan is being planned on a cost recovery basis. It is expected based upon the 2020 pilot events that six major events organized through the PMC should allow for cost recovery. The goal for the Drive-In Events is for ticket revenue, sponsorship opportunities and funding redirected from Community partner organizations to offset all expenses. The largest expense is the cost of the Event Stage for a three-month period totalling \$75,000 (net of HST). Any expense-recovery shortfall can be accommodated within the PMC operating budget.

Background

2020 Drive-In Event Concert Series

In March of 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 emergency the PMC cancelled 7 major live events as well as the Peterborough OHL Petes, the MSL Peterborough Lakers seasons and the MUSE Winter & Spring film series. In July 2020, the City's Emergency Control Group gave support for alternate forms of entertainment that included a pilot for Drive-In Entertainment in the PMC parking lot. Peterborough Public Health (PPH) reviewed and approved the protocols followed. A two night live Drive-In concert series was held and featured Canadian group The Sheepdogs with the Jim Cuddy Band on Friday, September 18 and country singer Tim Hicks with special guest Jason McCoy on Saturday, September 19, 2020. This unique concert experience was the first of its kind to be offered in Peterborough and offered a safe and responsible way for the community to enjoy live music from the safety and comfort of their own vehicle. These two concerts were organized with a capacity of 225 cars and revenues ensured no costs were incurred by the City. The purpose was not only to provide a new entertainment option in the city but also to show promoters and the public that this concept could work if still necessary in 2021.

2021 Drive-In Entertainment Opportunities with Community Partner Organizations

This Drive-In event pilot became the framework and basis of planning for more entertainment events for 2021. Discussions with Arts, Culture and Heritage partner organizations have been ongoing as the community finds new and inventive ways to work through the effects of the pandemic and focus on the importance of keeping entertainment alive in the community. PMC staff are recommending an event concept that would welcome community partners. The 2020 pilot project provides an operational approach that can be used for 2021 planning to keep arts and entertainment alive in the community.

The PMC would organize a permanent stage similar to the one in place for the 2020 pilot events in the PMC parking lot to be set up for Drive-In events for an expected three-month period from June to August. PMC staff would have operational guidelines in place to meet all public health guidelines for social distancing and maximum number of participants. While PMC staff would expect to book the stage as it does for all events at the PMC, the vision is that this could also contribute to assisting other community organizations in being able to offer some programming in 2021. All local arts venues have been closed for the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic with some being able to offer limited virtual performances. It does not seem realistic that these indoor venues will be able to reopen in the near future and the City has been looking at ways to support venues and organizations. Normally the PMC only books larger events so as not to compete with smaller venues, but in this scenario due to the capacity of the parking lot, this new event stage is conducive to smaller events and acts that are usually booked at other city venues.

Community partner organizations that have shown interest to work with the City on this 2021 opportunity include Showplace Peterborough, Market Hall, Theatre Guild and MUSE International Film Festival. City staff believe that there are numerous other organizations that could potentially benefit such as festivals, theatre groups, and special events and discussions with these groups continue. Each of these groups would have the opportunity to present and/or produce their own live events and could involve their own sponsors, staff and volunteers and any eligible funding can be pooled in this cost-share scenario, providing exposure and entertainment opportunities otherwise unavailable this year as a result of pandemic restrictions. It is hoped this will allow these groups a means to continue to connect with their audiences, allow for them to promote future events once their venues reopen, keep their staff engaged in event planning, and possibly allow for some revenue generation.

Advisory Committee Presentations

An overview of the pilot Drive-In Events held in 2020 and the opportunity for Drive-In Entertainment events to be held in 2021 for an extended three-month period was presented at the February 11, 2021 meeting of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee and the February 16, 2021 meeting of the Arena, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. Both Committees acknowledge the benefit that the 2021 Drive-In Entertainment opportunity provides by pooling resources, allowing the broader arts community to participate in a safe and meaningful way. Comments and suggestions from each Committee are being considered in the planning with community partners.

Projected Event Budget

The 2021 Drive-In Event opportunity plan includes renting the Drive-In Event Stage for a three-month period in an approach to provide event opportunities to multiple community partner organizations. The three-month plan would include approximately six large-scale concert events organized by the PMC, providing ample opportunity for all Community Partner Organizations to present and/or produce their own live events around these six large scale shows. It is anticipated that six large scale PMC produced events should allow for the concept to cover its costs. A typical large-scale event budget is presented in Chart 1 Sample Event Budget and shows the potential to financially break even. Additional events by community partner organizations provide the opportunity to further recover event expenses and the potential of additional profit.

Chart 1 Sample Event Budget

Revenue	Estimated Total (Net of HST)
Ticket Sales-200 X \$150	\$30,000
Sponsorship (1/6 of total)	\$5,000
Total Revenue	\$35,000
Expenses	
Artist Fee	\$12,500
Paid Duty Police	\$1,700
Security Staff	\$1,050
Event Stage (1/6 of total)	\$12,500
Event Production	\$6,000
Music Tariff 3%	\$900
Total Expenses	\$34,650
Estimated Net Profit	\$350

It would be expected that PMC would negotiate with each individual organization and event with the principles that the City's costs are recovered. Each event is expected to be unique and will be reviewed by PMC staff with the goal of being able to support as many events as possible.

Summary

The 2020 Drive-In Events at the Peterborough Memorial Centre provided an exciting and unique concert experience and was the first of its kind to be offered in Peterborough, offering a safe and responsible way for the community to enjoy live music during COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Council approval of the recommendation in this report will allow Staff and Community Partner Organizations to pool resources and continue to work together to host Drive-In Entertainment events in 2021, providing exposure and entertainment opportunities otherwise unavailable this year as a result of pandemic restrictions.

Submitted by,

Sheldon Laidman
Commissioner of Community Services

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