

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

**SPECIAL EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

January 24, 2008

PRESENT:

Councillor Sheila Fougere, Chair
Mr. Douglas MacDonald, Vice-Chair
Councillor Dawn Sloane
Councillor Brad Johns
Mr. Stuart Jolliffe, Destination Halifax
Mr. Richard O'Beirne, Hotel Association of Nova Scotia
Ms. Sally Camus, Cultural Advisory Committee
Ms. June Buchanan, Cultural Advisory Committee
Mr. Bill Mont, Citizen Representative
Mr. Brad Smith, Greater Halifax Partnership

REGRETS:

Mr. Brian Rose, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

**STAFF AND
OTHERS:**

Mr. Andrew Whittemore, Manager, Community Relations,
Community Development
Mr. Andrew Cox, Coordinator, Civic Events & Festivals
Mr. Mike Gillett, Coordinator, Civic Events & Festivals
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	BLUE NOSE INTERNATIONAL MARATHON - Mr. Jerry Walsh & Mr. Chris Larson	3
3.	GREAT ATLANTIC BLUES AND BEYOND FESTIVAL - Mr. Bruce Smith	4
4.	INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS COMPETITION - Mr. Michael Merrall, Mr. Ray Brazeau, & Mr. Frank Abels	4
5.	HALIFAX COMEDY FEST - Ms. Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons	5
6.	ATLANTIC FRINGE FESTIVAL - Mr. Ken Pinto	6
7.	DISCUSSION	6
8.	ADJOURNMENT	7

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:11 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. BLUE NOSE INTERNATIONAL MARATHON - Mr. Jerry Walsh & Mr. Chris Larson

Mr. Jerry Walsh and Mr. Chris Larson provided the presentation on the International Blue Nose Competition. Highlights of their presentation were as follows:

- C There are three key points to having the event:
 - 1. Pride of Place - the goal is to showcase Halifax. Marathon runners visit other cities to tour them not simply to enter a race. The marathon route includes many local highlights.
 - 2. Health and Wellness Legacy - to promote healthy, active living among Nova Scotians. It is the competitions policy to not pay runners to partake in the event as they are looking to attract ordinary, everyday runners. There will be a very heavy emphasis on youth with the aid of a partnership with Doctors Nova Scotia.
 - 3. Economic Impact on HRM - Physiotherapists and masseuses are fully booked before and after the event. The real economic impact comes from new visitors coming to the Municipality.
- C The competition is growing steadily and expects approximately twelve thousand (12, 000) participants this year;
- C The event is positioned on the Victoria Day long weekend. A celebration party will be held that Sunday night to encourage visitors to stay longer.

A discussion ensued with the presenters responding to questions. The following comments were noted:

- C The event is carrying a deficit of approximately one hundred thousand dollars and is currently on a repayment plan with HRM;
- C The additional funding would be used for policing services which cost approximately sixty thousand (60, 000) dollars and to invest in marketing outside of Nova Scotia;
- C The event has a framework for marketing including outdoor signage and bus shelter and newspaper ads in our neighbouring provinces;
- C A lot of local marketing is complementary;
- C The YMCA youth program is a beneficiary.

3. GREAT ATLANTIC BLUES AND BEYOND FESTIVAL - Mr. Bruce Smith

C Presentation CDs and Blues Festival Guides were submitted to the Committee.

Mr. Bruce Smith provided the presentation on the Great Atlantic Blues And Beyond Festival. Highlights of his presentation were as follows:

- C There will be an estimated audience of over thirty thousand (30, 000) consisting of seventy (70) percent local attendees and thirty (30) percent visitors;
- C This will be an annual event;
- C There will be free noontime concerts over the week with a focus on emerging artists;
- C The festival would be interested in working alongside the Atlantic Film Festival on joint projects;
- C The event will hopefully take place on the Garrison Grounds;
- C This is a special request for funding from the Special Events Reserve so the event can become financially stable and not require as much funding in the future.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Smith responding to questions. The following comments were noted:

- C An estimated ten (10) to twelve (12) percent of funding comes from sponsorship. There are currently several pending sponsorships;
- C Artists are currently reserved for the event;
- C Concerns were raised regarding the decision to hold the festival at a time when the municipality will already be at capacity with other events;
- C The festival will be launching a website, myhalifaxstay.com, that is based on a European model in which residents rent out their homes. They will be building a registry of suitable rental properties to help deal with the issue of accommodation;
- C It was suggested that the festival look into the rental of the carpet from HRM as the event will be taking place on the grass at the Garrison Grounds.

4. INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS COMPETITION - Mr. Michael Merrall, Mr. Ray Brazeau, & Mr. Frank Abels

Mr. Michael Merrall, Mr. Ray Brazeau, & Mr. Frank Abels provided the presentation on the International Fireworks Competition. Highlights of their presentation were as follows:

- C The competition will be under the theme of "Fire and Rock";
- C The group is steering towards the latter part of September to hold the event;
- C The working plan is to hold five (5) separate events over four (4) days. One (1) country an evening for three (3) evenings as well as a kick off event night have been planned;
- C There is an idea to use fireworks to celebrate the Year of Democracy and it's two hundred and fiftieth (250) anniversary;
- C This event will be exclusive to Canada;
- C The show will be shot from a barge;
- C The competition has sponsorship from Atlantic Lottery and Aliant;
- C The competition is looking for help with municipal services as well as financial support.

A discussion ensued with the presenters responding to questions. The following comments were noted:

- C The competition is very flexible in it's ability to move from a September date;
- C Concerns were raised regarding the financial request of seventy-five thousand (75, 000) to one hundred and seventy-five thousand (175, 000) dollars as it is not as specific as the Committee would have liked;
- C There will be no entrance fee for competitors or the public;
- C There is a possibility of pairing up with the Navy in their celebrations in 2009;

5. HALIFAX COMEDY FEST - Ms. Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons

Ms. Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons provided the presentation on the Ha!lifax Comedy Festival. Highlights of her presentation were as follows:

- C The festival takes place during the shoulder season in April;
- C There are two point five million (2, 500, 000) dollars in economic benefits from the festival;
- C The festival is one (1) of CBC's most watched programs. There are spotlight on Halifax features included in the show;
- C Comics work regional and local aspects into their routines;
- C There is a focus on youth workshops.

A discussion ensued with Ms. Kirkpatrick Parsons responding to questions. The following comments were noted:

- C There is room for growth in many aspects of this festival. Gala events sell out quickly but the festival is unable to add more venues without additional funding;

- C The festival would like to have a head liner at the Casino on the weekdays to take attendance up to capacity which requires the means to attract bigger names;
- C The bulk of the salaries allotted for in the budget are for performer fees;
- C Destination Halifax has been a partner of the festival for three (3) years;
- C DVDs of past shows showcasing Halifax are available.

6. ATLANTIC FRINGE FESTIVAL - Mr. Ken Pinto

Mr. Ken Pinto provided the presentation on the Atlantic Fringe Festival. Highlights of his presentation were as follows:

- C This will be the eighteenth year for the festival;
- C Thirty-five (35) to forty (40) plays occur annually in seven (7) downtown venues with a total of three hundred (300) performances;
- C A large issue for the festival is accessibility to price resistance as it doesn't want the theatre to become elitist;
- C The Festival requires stability in funding from the Municipality;
- C The Chronicle Herald is the festival's biggest sponsor
- C The festival currently has zero (0) deficit.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Pinto responding to questions. The following comments were noted:

- C The festival has previously not done advertising outside of the Municipality because of a lack of funding;
- C The requested ten thousand (10, 000) dollars will go towards marketing and locations;
- C A competition for the best burger in Halifax will be this year's food theme for the Fringe Festival.

7. DISCUSSION

The Chair advised the Committee that there needs to be additional discussion regarding several items. A special meeting will held in regards to:

- C The scoring sheet. When the sheets are scored they become public documents, therefore, a Committee consensus must be reached;
- C The Hallmark status of events. All of the groups who have presented thus far consider themselves to be Hallmark. The Committee will also decide the Hallmark status of past events and score them accordingly;

- C Additional presentations as several other events have already come forward to request funds. The Committee will decide whether or not they want to see these presenters;
- C Staff will be in attendance with more information regarding the intent of the scoring sheet.

Councillor Johns left the meeting at 3:49 pm.

It was noted that Mr. O'Beirne and Mr. Jolliffe had helped to create the scoring sheet and could be of help.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Shawnee Gregory
Legislative Assistant