



**SPECIAL EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 12, 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor Steve Craig, Chair
Mr. Stuart Jolliffe
Mr. Jeff Ransome
Ms. Laurie Sauers
Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll
Mr. Kevin MacIntyre

REGRETS: Councillor Brad Johns, Vice-Chair
Mr. Jason Bremner
Councillor Steve Adams
Mr. Leon N'Da

STAFF: Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager, Culture & Special Events
Mr. Paul Forrest, Civic Events Coordinator
Ms. Phoebe Smith, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Cathy Collett, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Special Events Advisory Committee are available online: <https://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/seac/SEACAgendasMins.php>

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.; The Committee recessed at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.; The Committee adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 3, 2015

Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj noted that on the top of page six of the minutes from the June 3, 2015 meeting, the discussion references “Hal-Con” while the following motion refers to “Epic Dartmouth.” The motion should be corrected to say “Hal-Con.”

Mr. Bhardwaj also noted that in the first motion on page four, the figure should read “\$44,250,” not “\$44,200.”

MOVED by Mr. Stuart Joliffe, seconded by Ms. Laurie Sauers that the minutes of June 3, 2015 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

MOVED by Mr. Stuart Joliffe, seconded by Mr. Jeff Ransome that the order of business be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Scoring Criteria Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve (MLSER) Grant Applications

The following was before the Committee:

- A copy of the staff presentation dated July 8, 2015.
- A memorandum to the Chair and Members of the Special Events Advisory Committee from Elizabeth Taylor, Manager, Culture & Events, dated June 30, 2015 re: MLSER scoring criteria.
- Attachment 1 – Draft Scoring Criteria
- MLSER Sporting/Tourism Score Sheet
- STEAM Predictor Report

Mr. Paul Forrest, Civic Events Coordinator, gave a presentation on the current MLSER scoring criteria. He explained that it has become a challenge to adequately address grant requests for specific amounts. Considering the best practises for handling grant requests, staff have contacted a number of comparable cities and requested feedback on their scoring criteria. Staff have not yet received the majority of these responses.

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager, Culture and Special Events, commented that she was surprised to learn that many of the other major Canadian cities do not have clearly defined scoring criteria for grant requests.

Mr. Forrest explained that the goal of reviewing the scoring criteria for MLSER is to establish transparent and informative scoring criteria.

Mr. Stuart Jolliffe provided commentary with respect to the usage of a tiered scoring system to evaluate events for consideration under the MLSER.

Ms. Taylor questioned what the best procedure for dealing with host bids might be. She emphasized that host bids also require scoring criteria so that arbitrary decisions are not made during negotiations.

Mr. Jeff Ransome referenced an Ontario study that indicated the benefit of cities proactively deciding what events to pursue.

The Committee discussed the value of the STEAM report and questioned its usefulness for HRM and how it fits in with other criteria. While considering its limitations, specifically its focus on sporting events, the Committee emphasised that it is a recognized tool and thus might help with establishing credibility and a sense of fairness on how decisions are made.

The Committee discussed the importance of working together with other organizations, specifically Destination Halifax, the Halifax Partnership, and the Province of Nova Scotia. While acknowledging that it is not in the Committee's mandate to take a proactive role in seeking out events, the Committee discussed the possibility of the Chair of the Special Events Advisory Committee bringing the different groups together in a discussion.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Nicoll, seconded by Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj, that Ms. Michele McKenzie, Interim President and CEO of Tourism Nova Scotia, and the key representatives of Destination Halifax and the Halifax Partnership be invited to an information-sharing session at a special SEAC meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Committee members commented that the proposed discussion would inform decisions made by the Special Events Advisory Committee.

The Committee reviewed the existing scoring criteria and acknowledged that it is necessary to have different scoring sheets for different types of programs.

Committee members discussed the underlying purpose and priorities of the scoring criteria.

Ms. Taylor reminded the Committee that the "softer" type of events focused more on community than business case have been transferred to the Grants Committee. She explained that the events on the table for discussion at this point are strictly the economic-focused events that are funded by the MLSER.

The Committee discussed various methods for scoring and the importance of having defined goals and categories. Committee members emphasized the need for having different scoring criteria for the different categories of events.

The Committee recessed at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

The Committee discussed the importance of economic impact for the events funded by the MLSER.

Committee members raised the issue of using "room nights," i.e. the number of hotel rooms booked for the event within the Halifax Regional Municipality, as a scoring criteria and considered instances in which events may strongly support business development but not generate many room nights.

The Committee discussed whether event location should be considered in the scoring criteria. Committee members commented that hotels are located across HRM, and since all hotels pay into the MLSER, it is important to encourage events across HRM, not just in the urban core.

Mr. Ransome emphasized the importance of business case in the scoring criteria and suggested that STEAM should only be used when evaluating sporting events

Mr. Ransome left the meeting.

The Committee discussed what is meant by reputation in terms of scoring criteria. Committee members emphasized the importance of having a tangible way to measure media exposure and Ms. Taylor agreed to consider this subject further.

The Committee ranked the categories for scoring criteria as follows:

1. Tourism Impact (50% - Hallmark, Emerging would be weighted for location & season, host bids will be different)
2. Economic Impact
3. Media Impact/Reputation – Exposure reach, reputation, advertising
4. Event Information/Organization – Quality, Experience, Partners/Sponsors, Legacy
5. Reputation – position the city in terms of brand promise, reflect city values.

The Committee considered the element of “legacy” and decided that it could be considered as part of the scoring criteria for a host bid, but given a weight of 0 for all other categories.

Committee members commented that it is important that organizations are accountable for where public funds are spent. The Committee considered requesting financial statements from organizers and ultimately decided that, as this would not always be appropriate, it would suffice to request a budget for the proposed event.

Mr. Bhardwaj left the meeting.

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – September 9, 2015

The Committee discussed moving the next meeting to the following week and all members expressed agreement.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

Cathy Collett
Legislative Support