



**SPECIAL EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 23, 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor Steve Craig, Chair
Councillor Stephen Adams
Mr. Stuart Jolliffe
Mr. Jason Bremner
Mr. Jeff Ransome

REGRETS: Councillor Brad Johns, Vice – Chair
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll
Mr. Kevin MacIntrye
Ms. Laurie Sauers
Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj

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 committee are available online:
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/seac/150923seac-agenda.php>*

The meeting was called to order at 9:14 a.m. adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:14 am in Halifax Hall, City Hall, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 12, 2015

Mr. Stuart Jolliffe clarified that when he referenced the music industry at the August 12, 2015 meeting, he was specifically referencing the practice of managing a tiered scoring system in which organizations are ranked in terms of their assessed benefit relative to each other. This practice requires looking at events simultaneously instead of on an individual basis (Page 3, paragraph 2 of the minutes from August 12, 2015).

MOVED by Mr. Jeff Ransome, seconded by Mr. Stuart Joliffe that the minutes of August 12, 2015 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Councillor Steve Adams, seconded by Mr. Jason Bremner that the order of business be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

The following was before the Committee:

- *2016 Ringette Canada National Championship Economic Impact Analysis – STEAM Report (sample)*

Mr. Jeff Ransom explained to the Committee that while the proposal is just a sample of a potential STEAM Report, it is important to consider the fact that if such an event was to come forward, there would not be a medium through which to address such a proposal. Mr. Ransome suggested that even if there was a “champion” to take over the project, they would not have had the resources to make a proposal. Not only does such an event need a champion organizer, it also requires a facilitator and someone who is able to fund the bid package. Mr. Ransome commented on the ease with which the STEAM report was completed and acknowledged that it is more appropriate for sports tourism than for other events given the tangible amount of quantifiable information usually available for sporting events.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 We Day Atlantic Canada 2015 Funding Request Grant

The following was before the Committee:

- *A staff recommendation report dated August 13, 2015*

Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Manager, Culture and Events informed the Committee that this is the third year that We Day Atlantic Canada has requested funding from the Special Events Advisory Council (SEAC). The first year the requested amount of 50,000 was granted. The second year the request was for 100,000 and the amount granted by SEAC was 50,000; however, Council adjusted this to 70,000.

As Ms. Taylor explained, there was no score given to the group when they first came in as a host, and when they were given a score sheet, the event fared well, with the size of the audience identified at 65,000. Staff recognizes the importance of this community event and the benefit it holds for young people across Nova Scotia, as is reflected by the staff recommendation that SEAC approve a 2015/16 payment of \$65,000 to fund We Day Atlantic Canada from the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (Q315). However, as Committee members commented and Ms. Taylor acknowledged, it is not actually a tourism event, and thus does not fit the criteria of the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve that is devoted entirely to events that create an economic impact.

Mr. Jolliffe commented that We Day is a great event, but that it has come to the wrong place for funding. Explaining that as it is definitely not a tourism event and would rank very low on economic benefit, he indicated that he would not support any amount of funding towards the event. Mr. Jolliffe emphasized how situations such as this one gestures to the need for new, clearer, criteria for the events that are funded by the MSLER.

Mr. Jeff Ransome questioned what the process would be to rectify this situation, commenting that We Day is a great program, but that it has come to the wrong account for funding.

Councillor Steve Adams agreed that We Day does not fit the mandate of the Committee and suggested that the funding should come from another source besides MSLER.

Mr. Ransome explained that after looking at the information brought forward and measuring it against the criteria for the MSLER, it is clear that it does not fit the current scoring criteria. Mr. Ransome questioned if it would be best if SEAC could suggest another funding source, and if so, what that source would be.

The Committee discussed other possible sources of funding for We Day.

Councillor Craig commented that agrees with the Committee that it does not fit the criteria for the MSLER and thus is not an appropriate use of MSLR funds. The Committee acknowledged that it is a difficult situation considering that the event has been funded by SEAC the last two years, but since it does not fit the mandate of MSLER funded events, this practice should not be perpetuated. Councillor Craig remarked that he is sure that HRM will support the event, but the question remains as to the most appropriate funding body.

Ms. Taylor noted that the event takes place in November and thus there is a tight timeline for the funding to be secured. She emphasized the need to consider timing in a way that is fair to the event organizers and reiterated what a positive experience We Day is to provide to youth. Ms. Taylor acknowledged that the event does fit better under the grants program than it does under the MSLER program.

The Committee discussed the best method for redirecting We Day to the appropriate funding source and decided that it would be best to refer it back to staff to determine the next course of action.

MOVED by Councillor Steve Adams, seconded by Mr. Jason Bremner that the Special Events Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve a 2015/16 payment of \$65,000 to fund We Day Atlantic Canada from the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (Q315). MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

MOVED by Mr. Stuart Jolliffe, seconded by Mr. Jeff Ransome that this report be referred back to staff to identify the appropriate funding source. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Update – Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve

The following was before the Committee:

- Draft Scoring Criteria

Ms. Taylor introduced a draft of the revised scoring criteria for the MLSE and lead the Committee through a discussion of each section.

Tourism Impact:

Location – The Committee discussed the rationale for giving more points to events that occur outside the urban core. Committee members commented that the idea is not to punish events that are located in the urban core, but rather to encourage rural representation. The Committee acknowledged that gaining or losing a few points in the “location” criteria would not substantially affect the outcome of any grant request, but that it is a gesture of subtle support to events outside the urban core. The Committee decided that it would be best to keep this category the way it is, with rural events scoring higher than urban events.

Seasons – The Committee discussed the impact of events in the off seasons and shoulder seasons and decided to continue scoring events higher when they occur during these periods.

Economic Impact:

Room Nights – The Committee recognized the difference between a confirmed number of room nights and an estimated number of room nights and commented that there is not a measurement to prove an estimated number of room nights. Committee members acknowledged that often it would come down to the experience of Committee members to determine if estimates are realistic. The Committee agreed that room nights should come under economic impact and that room nights and STEAM should be two discreet categories.

Media Impact:

Exposure Reach – Ms. Taylor asked the Committee to clarify if exposure reach was intended to be scored by medium or by event? Committee members commented that the frequency and reach of media exposure can and should be measured when possible. The Committee agreed that there should be a way to score something with a quantifiable exposure reach (such as a television advertisement) higher than something like a “web-blast” where the reach cannot be quantified.

Reputation – The Committee discussed the different aspects encompassed by reputation, such as brand promise, values, and the reputation of the event organizers. The Committee decided that since any event that is determined not to reflect positively on HRM would not make it to the scoring exercise, it makes more sense to remove reputation from the scoring criteria and add it to the preamble of the grants application in a “filtering” capacity.

Event Information – The Committee commented on the importance of applicants to provide accurate information and discussed whether board of governance and the experience of the event organizers are too subjective as scoring criteria. Mr. Jolliffe remarked that he does not see governance as subjective and believes there are ways to quantify this. Councillor Craig commented that the probability of success for an event comes down to the people running it, and that while this is somewhat subjective, it is still an important consideration. Mr. Jolliffe commented that he would like to see a distinction made between paid and volunteer employees, as there is a limit to what can be done through volunteer work. He explained that the success of an event is determined as much by staffing and structure as it is by board governance and organizer experience.

Sponsorships/Partnerships – Ms. Taylor questioned the Committee on what level of importance should be placed on obtaining sponsorships and partnerships with organizations beyond HRM. Mr. Jolliffe replied that the goal for big events should be that they are eventually able to attract enough corporate sponsorship that they do not need municipal funding. The Committee discussed how to value this criteria using the points system and considered making it a requirement or pre-requisite that an organization applies to other sources of funding. The Committee and staff agreed to consider this further.

The Committee agreed that in the case of emerging events, HRM would pay for the completion of the STEAM report for the first year.

Councillor Craig questioned if HRM has ever factored in the municipal costs to hosting events and Ms. Taylor replied in the affirmative.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to collect data on these costs over a span of several years and decided to consider this subject again in the future at a time when there is data available for discussion.

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – October 14, 2015

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Cathy Collett
Legislative Support