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Special Events Advisory Committee
March 25, 2009

TO: Special Events Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Dunphy
Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development

DATE: February 2, 2009

SUBJECT: HRM Hallmark Event Grant Renewals

ORIGIN

On January 28, 2009, the Special Events Advisory Committee approved a schedule of reports respecting the civic event funding for 2009. The first report required addresses Hallmark Events.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Special Events Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council:

- (a) Amend the Civic Event Policy and Granting Framework and MLSER Business Case to:
 - 1. Remove the International Air Show as a Hallmark Event.
- (b) Approve grants from the 2009/10 Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (Q315) in the amounts of:
 - 1. \$40,000 to the Atlantic Film Festival;
 - 2. \$40,000 to the Blue Nose International Marathon;
 - 3. \$90,000 to the Royal NS International Tattoo;
 - 4. \$25,000 to the Atlantic Jazz Festival;
 - 5. \$50,000 to the Halifax International Busker Festival;
 - 6. \$10,000 to the Pop Explosion; and
 - 7. \$10,000 to the Scotia Festival of Music.

BACKGROUND

In March 2007, Council approved a new Civic Events Policy and Granting Framework to improve the overall approach to HRM's civic event granting process. The framework enables the *Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve*, which is an operating reserve funded through the hotel tax levy, to fund annual Hallmark Events.

A Hallmark Event by definition is:

“a recurring event possessing such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, image, or publicity that it provides the host community with a competitive advantage. These events are associated with HRM's identity, help raise its profile globally, and position it as a place to invest. Over time, the event and destination can become inseparable in terms of their image.”¹

A) Existing Hallmark Events

In 2008, based on this definition, Regional Council approved a total of 8 Hallmark Events. These are listed below with details on each event:

1. The Atlantic Film Festival

The fourth major film festival in Canada is the international **Atlantic Film Festival**, held every September in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The AFF provides an unpretentious atmosphere for watching some of the best international, Canadian and Atlantic Canadian films, with opportunities to hear some of the best artists the region offers. In addition to screening films from around the world and across Canada, AFF programmers scour the world for unique films for an AFF audience. The Atlantic Film Festival Association (AFFA) has organized the festival and is committed to promoting and building a strong cultural industry in Atlantic Canada and presenting the best materials from this region and around the world to the community. The Atlantic Film Festival is in its 29th year and runs for 10 days. *In 2008 the Atlantic Film Festival received a \$40,000 grant from HRM.*

2. The Blue Nose International Marathon

2008 marked the 5th year for the Marathon. The marathon is staged solely in HRM and is designed to showcase the HRM and its natural beauty. Special care and attention has been applied to the course design, and full marathoners and 10k'ers have the unique experience of crossing the Macdonald Bridge into Dartmouth. The Blue Nose International Marathon is the largest run east of Ottawa. Runners and walkers come from all over Canada and other countries. One of the success stories of the Marathon is the youth run which draws thousands of participants each year. *In 2008 the Blue Nose International Marathon received a \$40,000 grant from HRM.*

¹ Civic Events Policy and Granting Framework, March 2007

3. The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo

Featuring over 2,000 world-class Canadian and international military and civilian performers, the Tattoo continues to deliver one of the world's premiere cultural and entertainment events. The 2008 Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo included eight distinct nations including, for the first time, Trinidad & Tobago. The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo continues to grow both in popularity and success and has shown a significant growth in economic return for the past three years. *In 2008 the Atlantic Film Festival received a \$90,000 grant from HRM.*

4. The Atlantic Jazz Festival

Recently celebrating its 22nd year, the Atlantic Jazz Festival is a major event on the Canadian music scene. The Festival's objective is to promote jazz, blues, world and other music to, educate the public, to develop and grow an audience for what is ostensibly non-commercial music. The Festival is Atlantic Canada's largest music festival with over 450 local, national and international performers delighting audiences that have reached the 65,000 mark for nine days every summer. Voted in 2007 as Canada's #1 summer attraction, festival goers at the Atlantic Jazz Festival experience nine days and over 300 performances set on stages across HRM in an event that national jazz authority Ross Porter, calls his "favourite festival hands down". *In 2008 the Atlantic Jazz Festival received a \$25,000 grant from HRM.*

5. The Halifax International Busker Festival

The Halifax International Busker Festival is the largest street theatre festival in North America. Featuring 500 International shows over 11 days. The festival attendance exceeds 500,000 people. In its 23rd year it was added to the "100 must sees in Nova Scotia" list and named the top Atlantic Festival by WestJet. Last year the event held its first local talent contest; great way to showcase talent in HRM. With over 76 performers and 200 volunteers it will continue to be one of the summers marquee event. *In 2008, the Halifax International Busker Festival received a \$50,000 HRM grant.*

6. The Halifax Pop Explosion

The Halifax Pop Explosion is one of Canada's most respected festivals and showcases for new and emerging music, art, and culture. Founded in 1993, the festival features the best in new music, and fuses it with the unique perspectives and exhibitions of art, media and pop culture from Halifax and around the world. This festival consistently receives international exposure on leading new music/youth websites and it has an outstanding reputation internationally as a leading new music festival. *In 2008 the Pop Explosion received a \$10,000 grant from HRM.*

7. Nova Scotia International Air Show

NSIAS is a unique regional attraction showcasing for all three branches of the Canadian Armed Forces. It is also the principal window on the world's aerospace, defence and aviation scene in the Atlantic Region. It consistently wins awards for excellence at the annual convention of the International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) and is recognized as one of

Canada's very best air shows. The Nova Scotia International Air Show will present and foster the growth of Air Shows in Atlantic Canada. Attendance can reach 40,000 people. *In 2008 the NSIAS received a \$30,000 grant from HRM.*

8. Scotia Festival of Music

The Scotia Festival of Music is a two-week long chamber music festival held annually and has been recognized internationally for its diverse programming and superior level of performers. On a national level it has been called "one of the most significant musical events in Canada's history". *SEAC is recommending to Halifax Regional Council a \$10,000 grant for the 2008 event.*

B) Proposed Hallmark Events

Over recent months one additional event has been advanced to the Special Events Advisory Committee for consideration as a potential Hallmark Event. As per the operating guidelines of SEAC, new Hallmark Events may only be considered in either of the following two instances:

- a) where requested by motion of Regional Council; or
- b) where requested by motion of SEAC.

The following provides an overview of the event that is to be considered as a Hallmark Event:

1. Halifax Greek Fest

Organized by the Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church this annual event draws thousands of spectators each year. Halifax Greek Fest presents music, dance, and outstanding food for those in attendance. The 2008 festival featured 'Odyssey' a renowned dance troupe from Ottawa. Located on the Purcell's Cove Road this nontraditional event location brings an excellent event out of the downtown core into a neighbourhood setting with great success.

C) Removal of Hallmark Events

As per the operating guidelines of SEAC, existing Hallmark Events may only be considered for removal when one or more of the following instances occur:

- a) the event does not take place;
- c) the event is determined to no longer satisfy the definition and intent of the policy;
- d) the event leaves the HRM region;

1. International Air Show

Council has recently learned of the decision to relocate the International Air Show from HRM. The discussion will address Council's options.

DISCUSSION

During the January 28, 2009 meeting of SEAC a new accountability operating procedure was tabled and approved. This process was instituted to ensure an improved level of accountability for all Hallmark Events, which as of March 2007, had the unique benefit of receiving annual funding through the Market Levy Special Event Reserve. This report is intended to assist SEAC in its deliberations respecting the existing Hallmark Event and the proposed 2009-2010 grant allocation. Additionally, this discussion addresses the proposed Hallmark Events as well as the possibility of the discontinuation of an existing Hallmark Event.

A) Hallmark Event Annual Assessment Criteria

Pursuant to SEAC procedures, all Hallmark Events must annually table and present a report on their past year's activity. The report would address matters related to attendance, economic generation, finances etc. Based on the report, the Committee would assess the impact of the event and recommend one of the following options for Council's consideration:

1. Maintain the grant amount from previous year;
2. Increase the grant amount;
3. Decrease the grant amount

Attachment One provides the operating procedures that guide SEAC respecting the annual evaluation of Hallmark Events. Organizers did not complete a Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve application for this process and as such there are no score sheets for returning Hallmark status events. Based on these criteria, it is staff's opinion that each of the events should maintain its current level of grant funding. The following discussion provides an overview of staff's rationale.

1. The Atlantic Film Festival

A stated goal of the Festival was to increase festival attendance and marketing/media attention in 2008. While other film festivals across Canada saw a decline in attendance, the Atlantic Film Festival was able to increase its overall attendance. Specifically, the Festival strategy was to provide more multi-ticket packages, third party events and a sold out Opening Gala. Based on these strategies the film festival kept theatres full in a year when tourism was reportedly down.

Additionally, festival organizers recognized the importance of increasing the program media coverage for this year, which was at an all time high. Higher profile directors, producers, actors and actresses are a key reason for longer stories and positive reviews. The Atlantic Film Festival also raised their website and design budget significantly providing the public with a world-class website and event poster. The event raised third-party event participation by 50% from 2007 and their event logo was branded wisely throughout HRM.

2. The Blue Nose International Marathon

A stated goal for the 2008 Marathon was to increase participation and to create more positive opportunities and attitudes for healthy youth. Both of these were satisfied. The Marathon

increased its overall participation from 6,969 in 2007 to 7,765 in 2008. The Youth Run registration increased from 2,500 in 2007 to 2,893 in 2008.

Another goal of the Marathon was to stimulate early season visitation to HRM and the Province by showcasing HRM's beauty, iconic attractions and pride of place. The timing of the Marathon, which is the May Victoria Weekend long weekend, has proven effective in terms of this strategy.

As with most events, the Marathon aimed to increase volunteer support. The marathon was successful in growing its volunteer capacity by training and utilizing over 1,000 volunteers in 2008.

Finally, the Marathon has been implementing their Debt Retirement Plan which will see agreeable arrangements with creditors, including the Halifax Regional Municipality, dealt with over the next several years.

3. The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo

In 2008 The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo recognized three major areas where they could increase the success of their annual program. In their funding application the goals were identified: increase in the Regional marketplace by attracting more non HRM Nova Scotians to the Tattoo, increase media exposure, and increase overall attendance.

The Tattoo's total viewing audience for 2008 was 59,296, an increase of 2,250 people from the previous year. Attendance at both the free concerts in the Grand Parade and on Spring Garden Road also rose in 2008.

Tourists from outside HRM attending the show generated \$2.33 million, an increase of \$550,000 from the previous year. Based on these figures, it is estimated that the overall economic contribution to the Province in 2008 is \$52.7 million, an increase of \$5.0 million from previous year. The expansion of the 2008 marketing campaign to non HRM Nova Scotians is purported as the primary reason for this increase.

The event organizers also chose to increase its television budget by \$20,000 to raise event awareness and media exposure in the Regional marketplace. Additionally, in partnership with Scotiabank, event organizers distributed promotional materials through 100,000 bank statements. The organizers also collaborated with Benjamin News to distribute 300,000 copies of print media across Quebec and Ontario. As a result, event organizers saw an increase in attendees from Ontario in 2008.

4. The Atlantic Jazz Festival

In 2008 The Atlantic Jazz Festival made three significant impacts on the community with their annual festival. First, the Jazz Festival surpassed their attendance estimate by over 10,000 people. The original attendance estimate for 2008 was 45,000 but the actual number

was 55,839 and this did not include the numbers of people who attended non-official venues, bars and restaurants where Jazz Festival performers were doing additional shows.

In 2008 the Atlantic Jazz Festival re-introduced the "Take It To The Street Jazz Parade" bringing back a free and very popular component of the festival. The Jazz Parade attracted over 15,000 people to the parade route along Spring Garden Road. The parade also was a catalyst for new Spring Garden Road Jazz Festival weekend. The organizers are committed to continuing to present the parade and develop it as a world class tourism attraction.

The Atlantic Jazz Festival introduced a "Going Green" program in 2008. This included a variety of initiatives aimed to reduce the environmental footprint of both the festival and its audience. Initiatives included use of green products, increasing electronic media, and reducing printed materials by 300,000 sheets of paper. A volunteer "Green Team" was also introduced to assist festival goers with making smart environmental choices.

Finally, the Atlantic Jazz Festival began implementing a Debt Retirement Plan. This will ensure agreeable arrangements with creditors, including the Halifax Regional Municipality, dealt with over the next several years and at the same time provide a successful execution of the festival.

5. The Halifax International Busker Festival

The 22nd Halifax International Busker Festival goal for 2008 was to rebrand the quality of performers, provide a stepping stone for local artists, and to increase hotel room sales during the eleven day festival.

Recognizing the image of buskers and its performers had become tarnished over time festival organizers redirected focus and resources to retaining quality street performers from well-recognized and respected organizations. In 2008, the festival programmed street theatre performers representing Cirque De Soleil, Broadway, Americas Got Talent, The Guinness Book of World Records and local arts group Atlantique Cirque. By focussing on acts versus solo artists, event organizers increased the number of performers from 26 in 2007 to 76 in 2008. The Aliant People's Choice Award vote count tripled and the media was extremely positive throughout the eleven day event. The Calypso Tumblers were finalists on Americas Got Talent and were considered to be the best group in event history.

Another change in 2008 was a re-commitment to supporting and developing local talent. In fact, the festival's original mandate had always been to promote and develop local artists and culture. The addition of Westjet's "Maritimers Got Talent" contest was important in this regard attracting upwards of 56 local performers from Nova Scotia to audition for the event. A total of 6 performers were selected and showcased during the eleven days of the festival.

Finally, organizers report that the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia (HANS) credit the Halifax International Busker Festival as one of the key factors for high hotel room sales during the eleven days of the festival.

6. The Halifax Pop Explosion

The Halifax Pop Explosion attained Hallmark status in December of 2008, well after the actually event occurred. Given the outcomes of the 2008 event were already reported during their initial presentation to SEAC, it would not be beneficial for the event organizers to address the Committee so close to this decision. The Halifax Pop Explosion however would be expected to comply with the reporting process on a go-forward basis.

7. Scotia Festival of Music

Following a presentation at the January 28th meeting, SEAC motioned that the Civic Event Policy and Granting Framework be amended to include Scotia Festival of Music as a Hallmark event. As such, the event organizers should not be expected to speak to their event so close to this decision. However, should Council approve this amendment, the Scotia Festival of Music organizers would be required to comply with the reporting process on a go-forward basis.

B) Proposed Hallmark Events

As noted in the background, where requested by motion of Regional Council, an event may be considered for Hallmark status.

At the July 8, 2008 meeting of Regional Council, SEAC was asked to consider the GreekFest for Hallmark status. In consideration of the event, SEAC shall refer to the definition contained within the Civic Event Policy and Granting Framework. Should SEAC confirm concurrence with regional Council the event would be evaluated using the standard MLSER criteria.

Upon review of the event and the definition, it does not appear to be consistent with the Hallmark Event. Should SAEC not approve GreekFest as a Hallmark Event, it will not be eligible for funding through the MLSER. However, the Greek Festival would qualify for funding consideration through HRM's annual Festival and Events granting program. It is recommended that this event be redirected and advanced for consideration through this alternate program.

C) Removal of Hallmark Events

At the January 28, 2009 Special Events Advisory Committee meeting the committee passed a motion to remove the Nova Scotia International Air Show from Hallmark status. In the last month, staff has learned that the International Air Show will no longer be staged within the boundaries of HRM. Based on the operating policy of SEAC this is adequate grounds for consideration for removal.

Given the limited funds of the Market Levy Special Events Reserve, the number of Hallmark Events that have been added in the last year, and the ever increasing demand on the Municipality to support

events, it is staff's recommendation that this event be removed from the policy as a Hallmark Event. Should Regional Council approve this change, an additional \$30,000 in capacity will be achieved.

If, in the future, the International Air Show decides to return to HRM, it would not automatically qualify for funding, nor would it automatically be reconsidered for Hallmark Event status. Rather, as per the operating procedures, the event could only be reconsidered as Hallmark Event where Council amended its policy to reinstitute the event.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (Q315) budget for 2009/10 is approximately \$1,640,500 and is based on a confirmed projection by Finance. Assuming the Reserve remains consistent, the Reserve can accommodate the proposed grants the events noted in the recommendations. Budget availability has been confirmed by Financial Services.

Budget Summary

09/10 Budget summary

Budget 09/10 (Approved)	\$ 1,375,000
Proposed Grants	\$ 265,000
Total Budget Special Events	\$ 1,640,000

Q315 Reserve

Projected Reserve Balance to March 31, 2010 is \$116,000.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

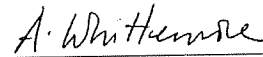
- Alternative 1: SAEC could recommend reducing the grants recommendations.
- Alternative 2: SEAC could recommend increasing the grant recommendations

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Hallmark Events Operating Guidelines

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:



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ATTACHMENT 1

Hallmark Events Operating Guidelines

A Hallmark event is a recurring event possessing such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, image, or publicity that it provides the host community with a competitive advantage. These events are associated with HRM's identity, help raise its profile globally, and position it as a place to invest. Over time, the event and destination can become inseparable in terms of their image. A unique situation, and as such, will have a separate and distinct decision making process.

A) Creating a "Hallmark" event

An event may only be considered for Hallmark status in either of the following two instances:

4. Where Regional Council motions SEAC to consider the event; or
5. Where a SEAC member motions to consider an event.

In terms of *Option 1*, where Regional Council motions SEAC to consider an event as Hallmark, the event would be discussed and the validity in advancing this event would be determined. Where there is a consensus that the event warrants consideration, event organizers would be invited to submit an application and the formal review process (ie. presentation) would be initiated. Eventually, a recommendation report would be tabled with Regional Council for final decision. Where the event is not considered appropriate, a Committee report would be tabled with Council outlining the rationale.

With respect to *Option 2*, a notice of intent would be tabled by a committee member to inform their intent to discuss the event during the next regular session of SEAC. The event would be discussed and a decision made to advance or not advance the event. Where the Committee agrees the event warrants further consideration, the event organizer would be invited to submit an application and the formal review process (ie. presentation) is initiated. Eventually, a recommendation report would be tabled with Regional Council for final decision.

B) Hallmark Event Accountability Process

With respect to existing events, each Hallmark event organizer will provide a written report no later than the last Friday of January for SEAC review. Additionally, each organizer will be required to conduct an annual presentation to SEAC. The final report and presentation will serve as the basis for determining the grant allocation for the coming year. The presentations will address the factors outlined below. Following the review of the final report and presentation, SEAC will evaluate the event and determine one of three recommendations:

6. Maintain Funding Level from Previous Year Reduce Funding
7. Reduce Funding
8. Increase Funding

- Number of Volunteers
- Historical Background
- Number of Tourists events brought to HRM
- Actual budget
- Financial Statement
- Strength of promotional campaigns
- Total number of the audience in attendance
- Tourism period
- Event location
- Ability to obtain support from other sectors of the community
- Economic impact
- Next year's projected budget
- Next year's planned program/any changes innovations, improvements/maintaining status quo

C) Removal of Hallmark Events

Existing Hallmark Events may only be considered for removal when one or more of the following instances occur:

- a) the event does not take place;
- i) the event is determined to no longer satisfy the definition and intent of the policy;
- j) the event leaves the HRM region;

With respect to removal of an event, a notice of intent would be tabled by a committee member to inform their intent to discuss the removal of the event during the next regular session of SEAC. The event would be discussed between the Committee and a decision made to advance a recommendation to Regional Council. A recommendation report would be tabled with Regional Council for final decision.