

COMMUNICATION 131106

Received From: Diane Smithson, CAO
Addressed To: Committee of the Whole
Date: September 8, 2020
Topic: 2020 Appreciation Night

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending the cancellation of the 2020 Appreciation Night currently scheduled for Saturday, December 12, 2020 due to restrictions imposed by and impacts of COVID-19. It is being recommended at this time to allow for timely cancellation of event preparations made to date.

BACKGROUND

Each year, the Town hosts an Appreciation Night to thank its many volunteers who do great work on behalf of the Town and the community, declare the next Citizen of the Year and issue Year of Service awards to Town staff. This event includes a dinner, awards ceremony and dance for approximately 300-350 people.

DISCUSSION

Town staff have already begun preparations for the 2020 Appreciation Night. The caterer has been selected, and linens and the hall have been booked. Each fall up until the December event, preparations ramp up to ensure a successful event.

Due to Covid, 2020 has already seen the cancellation of many traditional community and family events such as Canada Day festivities, Wine'd Around Downtown, Easter dinner, Santa Clause Parade, etc. Until such time as a vaccine is developed, cancellation of events or changes to events to limit attendees, ensure social distancing, etc. will continue to occur.

In the past, the annual Appreciation Night has included 300-350 attendees which includes volunteers, Council members, staff, and their spouses. This number of attendees is well beyond the current limit permitted in an interior space under Provincial restrictions.

Below are some options Council can consider:

Option 1 – Cancel the Event

Under this option, the actual event would be cancelled but staff would determine other virtual means of proceeding with the declaration of the Citizen of the Year and of staff Year of Service Awards.

Cancelling the event this year would also provide Council and Staff an opportunity to review the current format for the event to determine if any changes should be made going forward.

Option 2 – Break the Event into Smaller Groups and Hold over Multiple Dates

The Appreciation Night attendees could be broken down into smaller groups that would align with current Provincial restrictions of 50 people but would only include a dinner and no entertainment in order to keep costs within the budgetary limit. This would require a caterer to be available over multiple dates and we could try to have the group events held within the span of a week so the decorations and hall could be used for each group event. The Town would need to ensure social distancing and other safety protocols are in place. Given the number of attendees, this would require 6-7 multiple events. Although the smaller groups would include different attendees, there would still be similar staff working at each event interacting with all groups thereby creating some risk to staff.

Staff feels that the Town should be not be seen to be encouraging public events at this time to ensure the safety of staff and our community. As a result, this option is not recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for Appreciation Night is \$12,000 which pays for catering, entertainment, decorations, awards, etc.

If the event is cancelled, this would be a savings to the Town that could be used to offset other lost revenue/increased expenses due to COVID incurred this year.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the 2020 Appreciation Night be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions and impacts; and

THAT plans be developed to allow for the announcement and recognition of the 2020 Citizen of the Year and staff Year of Service Awards.