
TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN, AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: ONALEE GROVES, BA, MAIS, MANAGER OF CULTURE

NOTED: ZVI LIFSHIZ, B.SC, MBA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INVEST BARRIE
CARLA LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: CANADA 150 CELEBRATIONS – LABOUR DAY WEEKEND

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2017

In response to questions from members of City Council on January 23rd, 2017 this memo will provide further information on the rationale behind moving Celebrate Barrie to the Labour Day weekend, the marketing approach to the Fireworks and Cultural Festival as well as the involvement of Tourism Barrie in planning.

The Culture Branch's Events team has in the past been approached by external event organizers interested in presenting events on Labour Day weekend, but for a variety of reasons these events have not taken place. These events may have been denied by the BEAT team for one of variety of reasons, perhaps they were not a good fit for our city, or they were not being presented by experienced organizers. Culture staff and Tourism Barrie have noted frequent inquiries from cottagers and travelers on what there is to do in Barrie on Labour Day, so by programming the long weekend the fireworks and cultural festival will fill a current void. According to Tourism Barrie other communities have presented Labour Day weekend events and achieved significant success. The City of Barrie's programming will largely take place on Saturday September 2nd and Sunday September 3rd to allow families the opportunity to prepare for the first day of school on Labour Day.

Staff connected with Tourism Barrie early in the process and they indicated their enthusiasm for the celebrations by providing letters of support that were attached to the City's funding applications. It is the intention of staff to involve Tourism Barrie in future discussions around promotions once the event receives approval from City Council.

City of Barrie Events staff are experienced events organizers who stay current with tourism trends and best practices through organizations such as Tourism Barrie, Festivals and Events Ontario and the RTO7. As part of their role, events staff are responsible for measuring attendance and surveying all corporate events such as Winterfest, Kempenfest, and Celebrate Barrie in order to gather important information. Events staff measure attendance and gather data on audience origin, age, length of stay, accommodations, frequency of visits and the number of times people have attended an event. This data is collected and it serves to assist Events staff in planning new events, such as this one.

As Celebrate Barrie is an event with a proven track record of support from our community, it is the intention that it will transfer a ready-made audience to the late summer festival. Celebrate Barrie has previously boasted crowds of 10,000 to 15,000 + people and staff are confident of significantly exceeding those numbers with the proposed enhanced programming. On Canada Day Barrie's waterfront typically experiences large crowds (over 30,000) for the fireworks celebrations so staff are confident that there will be a positive and significant response from our community to the labour day fireworks festival. Marketing efforts will be focused on attracting a large audience from the GTA and the Muskoka's in specific tourist publications. With an increased promotions budget the Events and Communications staff will reach out to a broad audience through radio stations and social media to ensure that residents and tourists alike are aware of Barrie's Canada 150 celebration. Staff are eager to begin their promotions of what promises to be an exciting lineup of events and activities.