



Corporate Report

NO: R031

COUNCIL DATE: March 9, 2009

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: March 9, 2009
FROM: General Manager, Planning and Development FILE: 0540-20 AAC
SUBJECT: 2009 Flavours of Surrey Event

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve an allocation of up to \$15,000 from the Council Initiatives Fund in support of the 2009 Flavours of Surrey event.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on preparations for the second annual Flavours of Surrey Event, to be held on Sunday, July 26, 2009, at the Historic Stewart Farm, and to seek Council's approval for funding and "in kind" City services needed to stage the 2009 event.

BACKGROUND

On July 27, 2008, Surrey's Agricultural Advisory Committee ("AAC") hosted the first annual Flavours of Surrey at the Historic Stewart Farm. Attracting over 300 people, this food-tasting event was intended to raise public awareness of foods that are grown and/or produced in Surrey.

Chefs from seven local restaurants prepared dishes with a focus on locally grown ingredients. This allowed the public to sample the wide array of dishes prepared by chefs from Sea Horse Grill, Kla-How-eya, Fieldstone Artisan Breads, Henry's Outdoor Barbeque, Delitalia Fine Foods, Rasoi Indian Cuisine and Dolce Gelato. Many dishes used locally-grown berries, herbs, and vegetables, as well as local chicken, pork, and dairy products.

Along with food tasting, promoting the "local" theme was prevalent at the Flavours of Surrey event in other ways. The adult ticket included beer tasting provided by a local brewing company and wine tasting from Surrey's only winery. There was live entertainment from local musicians, The Wheat in the Barley and Jennifer Kennedy.

The event also included interactive children's activities, local farm animals, displays showing facts about Surrey's agriculture, seed planting, and heritage tours and displays. Overall, the Flavours of Surrey event provided a family-oriented, interactive, educational and entertaining environment to showcase locally grown food and businesses.

This event, which replaced the Agricultural Farm Tour, which had been sponsored by the AAC for a number of years, also aligned well with the City of Surrey's larger policy framework. The Surrey Agricultural Plan (1999) outlines goals for the enhancement of local demand for local agricultural products by helping to re-establish the links between the local residents and local agriculture. The goal of promoting Surrey's agriculture and related businesses is also reinforced through objectives set out in the City's Sustainability Charter and the Economic Development Strategy.

Given the event's great success last year, on September 4, 2008, the AAC endorsed a second Flavours of Surrey event to take place in 2009 by recommending "that Council direct staff to prepare a report outlining the budget required for the 2009 Flavours of Surrey event". The AAC also suggested that the Economic Development Department and Special Events be involved in the 2009 Flavours of Surrey. At the October 6, 2008 Regular Council Meeting, Council endorsed the AAC's recommendation.

This report outlines the goals and budgetary requirements for the 2009 Flavours of Surrey event.

DISCUSSION

Goals for 2009

In planning for the Flavours of Surrey 2009, the AAC has expressed the desire to expand and improve the event in a number of ways, as follows:

- Expand sales revenue without increasing the ticket price;
- Increase advertising opportunities (free and paid);
- Increase interest in and profile of the event;
- Include a larger interactive agriculture/educational component;
- Improve efficiencies for the "behind the scenes" operations; and
- Increase City staff support to include other Departments.

Increase Revenue

One area examined by the AAC to increase revenue and offset costs was sponsorship opportunities. Some financial support from the Surrey Farmer's Institute (\$900) has been confirmed, and some media sponsorship is likely. However, given the relatively small size of the event (under 500 people attending), securing large monetary sponsorship

dollars has been challenging. The AAC and staff will continue to pursue both monetary and non-monetary sponsorship opportunities.

Ticket sales could provide an opportunity to generate additional revenue by either increasing the entrance ticket price or increasing the number of tickets sold. Last year, the adult price was \$25, youth (6-13) \$10, and children 5 and under were free. This price point made the event well attended by families, a goal of the AAC. Other food-tasting events in the region have been more adult oriented. A price increase would likely reduce affordability for families, could change the family atmosphere of the event and potentially have an impact on the number of tickets sold. Increasing the number of tickets sold is a preferred option to generate additional revenue to offset costs.

Since the event is still relatively new, the AAC holds the view that increasing the ticket numbers should be done in an incremental way. For the 2009 event, the goal is to increase the ticket sales by 35% to 40%. This increase will require additional promotion and exposure for the event.

Increase Advertising Opportunities

For the 2008 Flavours of Surrey event:

- Radio station JRFM provided four on-air mentions and ticket giveaways, website posting with links, and an on-site visit and live broadcast from their "Funfinder" van on the day of the event. Representatives from JRFM have indicated interest in participating again this year;
- Two half page ads were posted in the NOW newspaper;
- The NOW newspaper and Peace Arch News provided editorial coverage; and
- There were listings in community event calendars of Edible BC, Edible Vancouver magazines and the Surrey Board of trade website.

To increase awareness about the event, staff will provide media advisories, and continue to liaise with newspapers, magazines and organizations as well as other media and community organizations. A budget for newspaper advertising will be needed in addition to the "no-cost" opportunities for raising awareness.

Increase Interest and Profile

The AAC is encouraging a wider range of types of food for sampling to capture the diversity of food and culture in Surrey. Last year, the restaurants included Aboriginal, Indian, French, Italian, Seafood, and North American cuisine. This year the goal is to add three additional restaurants to include Asian, African, and an additional European cuisine.

Staff is attempting to book a cooking demonstration by a local celebrity chef and is inviting local artisans whose work fits with the agriculture theme, to contribute to the atmosphere of the event.

Expand the Agricultural Awareness Component

Herb planting, farm animals and heritage farming displays were very popular attractions at the 2008 event. For 2009, the Committee has invited members from the Food Action Coalition and the Surrey Urban Farmer's Market to help plan for a larger interactive, educational component.

One option under consideration is the addition of a small farmer's market component. Local farmers that provide food ingredients to the restaurants could also bring fresh produce to sell at the event. The presence of the farmers and their produce will help the public make the link to local food in a more direct way.

Improve Behind the Scene Operations

Fortunately, the weather was warm and sunny for the first Flavours of Surrey, and rain protection was not required. However, it would be prudent to be prepared for unpredictable weather, given that the event will go ahead rain or shine. The event will also require more tents to accommodate additional restaurants, educational booths and artisans.

Twenty-six tents will be required in order to have covered areas for the food vendors, stage, educational tents, and seating area. At this time, staff has secured two 20 x 20 sized tents from Envision Insurance. There are 10 tents available from Parks, Recreation & Culture; so 16 additional tents will need to be rented. Parks, Recreation & Culture Department tents will be used during the Fusion Festival the weekend before the Flavours of Surrey event and could potentially be damaged. With only a week lead-time for repairs, a budget contingency to rent up to 20 tents is prudent.

Other improvements to the event include a better sound system and more hand washing stations.

Staff Support

In 2008, the event was mainly organized and implemented by Planning and Development Department and Engineering Department staff, who are not normally involved in organizing these types of events. City Departments with specific areas of expertise have been contacted to assist with the 2009 event. Economic Development and Parks, Recreation & Culture have provided valuable advice and assistance.

Budget for 2009

The following table outlines the budget requirements for the 2009 Flavours of Surrey.

Anticipated Funding Sources	Estimated Amount	Expenses	Estimated Cost
Ticket Sales *(35% additional ticket sales compared to 2008)	\$ 6,500	Food ingredients (10 restaurants)	\$ 8,000
Surrey Farmer's Institute	\$900	Equipment (tents, stage, sound system, portable toilettes, tables, chairs, hand washing station, signage etc.)	\$10,000
2008 Contingency	\$900	Entertainment (musicians, stage and sound system)	\$1,500
		Advertising, Marketing, brochure and ticket production	\$3,800
Total	\$ 8,300	Total	\$23,300
Shortfall	(\$15,000)		

With an estimated 35% in additional ticket sales and confirmed sponsorship, the Flavours of Surrey will experience a shortfall of \$15,000. This shortfall may be reduced if more sponsorship is secured or if ticket sales exceed budget expectations.

The above table does not include staff time, which will be provided by the various Department budgets.

CONCLUSION

The 2008 Flavours of Surrey event was very successful. The event was well attended and helped promote awareness about local agriculture and local businesses in a family-oriented, interactive, educational and entertaining environment.

However, due to budgetary constraints some behind the scene operations were not as efficient and organized as they should have been. Staff has learned from the 2008 experience, and are anxious to make the 2009 Flavours of Surrey a bigger and better success.

Since the event helps promote many of the City's goals and objectives in the Agricultural Plan, Sustainability Charter, and the Economic Development Strategy, the AAC holds the view that it is important to hold a second Flavours of Surrey in 2009. Additional funding would allow the event to expand and improve. Staff will continue to pursue both monetary and in-kind sponsorship opportunities to reduce the cost of the event; however, the 2009 event will require some financial assistance from the City.

To support the continuation of the Flavours of Surrey event, it is recommended that Council approve an allocation of up to \$15,000 from the Council Initiatives Fund for the 2009 Flavours of Surrey.

Original signed by
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