

NO: R097

COUNCIL DATE: May 29, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **May 24, 2017**

FROM: **Director, Public Safety**

FILE: **1850-20**

SUBJECT: **Best Bar None Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Public Safety Division recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and,
2. Endorse the staff recommendation that the Best Bar None Program pursue funding and authority from the appropriate Provincial Authority and industry associations prior to consideration of their funding request.

INTENT

The City of Surrey has received a request from the Surrey Board of Trade (SBOT) and the Best Bar None Program to seek financial assistance for the establishment of the Best Bar None Program in Surrey. This report addresses that request.

BACKGROUND

At the Public Safety Committee meeting on January 30th, 2017, a delegation from the Surrey Board of Trade introduced representatives from the Best Bar None Program. The representatives outlined that the objective of the Best Bar None Program is to help develop safe restaurants and bars within the City of Surrey, as well as to reward those premises that achieve that standard. The SBOT and the Best Bar None Program are requesting a contribution in the amount of \$25,000 to start the program for a one year period.

Key benefits of the establishment of the Best Bar None Program were explained as follows:

- The Best Bar None program is set up to compliment the current programming in place within the City of Surrey and should provide success in terms of reducing alcohol related crime;
- Throughout the City of Surrey, bars and restaurants would be encouraged to compete to be the "best". The program provides a blue print of how the approach works and what the expectations are in order to receive accreditation; and

- The program encourages all responsible bars and restaurants to pull apart their services and see how they can be better stewards in the community by reducing the risk of alcohol-related harm, provide best-practices, create province-wide standards and increase the public's sense of security.

Additionally, in 2014, City staff and the Surrey RCMP reviewed the potential establishment of the "Bar Watch Program," established in some neighbouring municipalities. The goal of the program is to discourage and ultimately prevent patrons from engaging in unlawful and uncivil behavior that endangers other patrons, staff and police within and outside licensed establishments. The key component of this program is the volunteer participation of the bar owners and operators, as well as the sharing of information.

Under this program, bar staff scan an individual's driver's license prior to entry. If individuals are deemed to be an "undesirable" person or a "troublemaker", by virtue of their overt behavior or involvement in serious and/or violent criminal activities, they are refused entry to the premises. Information collected on problematic patrons is shared amongst all Bar Watch Program members within the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

After careful review of the "Bar Watch Program", it was determined that it could not be implemented within the City of Surrey due to privacy concerns.

DISCUSSION

City staff and the Surrey RCMP have engaged in ongoing discussion with staff from both the SBOT and the Best Bar None Program over the past number of years. The discussions have focused around the potential benefits of the program and the funding required to establish this program.

The delegation further noted at the presentation that matching funds would be pledged from the Provincial government; however, it was later determined that Provincial matching funds would not be forthcoming.

While there are many potential benefits to implement the Best Bar None Program within the City of Surrey, there are also a number of key points that need to be considered.

These considerations are as follows:

- Of the 322 businesses currently licensed with the City of Surrey (and are permitted to serve alcohol through the BC Liquor Control & Licensing Branch), Bylaw Complaints has received no relevant complaints with respect to the key points that the Best Bar None Program is set out to address. Furthermore, with the new BC Liquor modernization laws, bars and licensed facilities have greater operating latitude, which have not resulted in an increased number of complaints;
- Further broader consultation of the entire industry should be conducted to gauge the support of this initiative, which should include but not limited to the British Columbia Restaurant & Food Services Association (BCRFA) and Restaurants Canada (RC);
- There is currently no firm funding commitment from the Provincial Government; and

- An accreditation program has stronger alignment to the BC Liquor Control & Licensing Branch which regulates restaurants, bars, pubs, liquor retailers, manufacturers and special events. They are responsible for compliance to enable a vibrant liquor industry while minimizing health and social harms.

At this time, it is recommended that staff continue to support the SBOT in further consultation with the industry and the Provincial Government on this initiative. Until industry and relevant Provincial authorities take action, staff do not support the funding request for the Best Bar None program. If the appropriate Provincial governance and funding mechanisms are in place, staff recommend that this proposal be resubmitted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Endorse the staff recommendation that the Best Bar None Program pursue funding and authority from the appropriate Provincial Authority and industry associations prior to consideration of their funding request.



Terry Waterhouse
Director, Public Safety

TW/mc

q:\public safety office 2017\1 governance\1 public safety committee & council\final to council\2017\best bar none program final.docx
MC 5/25/17 4:59 PM

cc: Manager, Public Safety Operations
 Assistant Commissioner, (OIC) Surrey RCMP