

**Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Member Motion**

Date: **October 16, 2024**

Moved by: **Mayor Lovatt**

Seconded by: **Councillor Sherban**

Subject: **Strawberry Festival**

WHEREAS the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival has taken place the last weekend of June for the past 40 years; and

WHEREAS the Festival is run for the benefit of our community and our residents look forward to attending every year; and

WHEREAS the Festival attracts thousands of tourists into our community, thereby boosting our local economy; and

WHEREAS the Festival is run by a dedicated group of volunteers; and

WHEREAS the scale of the Festival has grown exponentially since its inception;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to examine how the Town can increase supports to the Festival; and

THAT staff bring a report to Council by the end of 2024 with a recommendation on how to proceed.

From: Mike Burns <mike.burns@strawberryfestival.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 4:16 PM
To: Iain Lovatt <iain.lovatt@townofws.ca>; Jennifer Hess <jennifer.hess@townofws.ca>
Cc: Rob Braid <rob.braid@townofws.ca>; Shannon Jaffer <shannon.jaffer@townofws.ca>;
Julia Troiani <julia.troiani@townofws.ca>
Subject: Future Strawberry Festivals

Dear Mayor Lovatt;

Thank you so much for joining us when the Strawberry Festival Board met with the Town's leisure and events team. The following is a brief overview of the conversation we had and we respectfully request you bring this information to counsel.

On Monday September 16th, the Strawberry Festival held its Annual General Meeting at 19 on the Park. The purpose of the AGM is to give an overview of the 2024 festival, have the members vote on the approval of our 'Unaudited Financial Report for 2023' and to elect the new board of seven directors. The 2024 festival was my last term as president and I currently sit as an ex-officio member of the board as the Immediate Past President.

Unfortunately as a result of several members leaving the board we were only able to elect four individuals to sit on the new board. After three calls for nominations no other people stepped forward. As our bylaws only require a quorum of three, we were able to move ahead as a four person board. However, of significance, of the four board members elected, none are able to stand as president or vice-president. This is a situation we are still trying to resolve so that it doesn't impact our "Not-for-Profit" Corporation status.

Sadly, most importantly, a number of our vital portfolio organizers have stepped down and retired from the committee. This leaves us in a position where key roles are empty with no one stepping forward to take them on. The two major portfolios are our Vendor acquisition and placement lead, and our Marketing lead. In addition our volunteer coordinator is stepping aside and our logistics coordinator wants to pare down his involvement.

The current board is looking at various solutions to all of these issues. One of our proposed solutions in relation to the festival itself, is to create a much larger partnership with the town. There is an idea that perhaps the town could take on the larger roles at the festival ; the Entertainment package, the Vendor Package, the Logistics Package, and continue with the Canada Day celebrations on July 1st (a Tuesday in 2025). The festival committee could stay on to manage the "community" type events such as ; The Pancake Breakfast, The Citizen/Sports Person of the Year, The Sandra Stronach Red Berry Cafe, The Gladys Clarkson Stouffville Bakes competition, The Totally Toddler competition, the Stouffville Library Spelling Bee and Picnic in the Park - to name a few...

As promised, in the next short period of time, I/we will put together a far more detailed breakdown of various options and potential conflicts and obstacles that we will share with your Leisure Services staff that will allow us to begin to work together to build another great festival in 2025 and beyond.

Should you have any questions or require any further information, please don't hesitate to call.

***Thank you once again;
Mike Burns***



Mike Burns, Immediate Past President

C: 289-423-3579

www.strawberryfestival.ca

"Through our teamwork, we are making a collective contribution to creating an engaged and caring community"