



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 3, 2023

Report Number: SRCS.23.03

Department: Community Services

Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.22.03 Indigenous Action Committee – 1
Year Pilot Project**

Purpose:

To report back to Council on the 1 year pilot of waiving facility rental fees for events hosted by the Indigenous Action Committee.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.23.03 regarding the Indigenous Action Committee 1 Year Pilot Project be received.
- b) That the permit fees for parks, community meeting rooms and gymnasiums be waived for Indigenous groups as outlined in Staff Report SRCS.23.22.
- c) That the City provide in-kind promotions and equipment rentals to Indigenous groups wishing to host community events in partnership with the City on dates of national significance as outlined in Staff Report SRCS.23.22.

Contact Person:

Donald Hearn, Director of Recreation and Culture, extension 2503

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

On February 23, March 2 and March 9, 2022, in response to Staff Report SRPI.22.021 (regarding Key Findings and Directions for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans), representatives of the Indigenous Action Committee (IAC) made several delegations to Council. On March 9, 2022, in response to those delegations, Council directed:

That staff be authorized to take all steps necessary to facilitate the rent free user agreement between the City and Indigenous Action Committee (IAC) for a 1 year pilot project at an appropriate City facility, and that staff report back with progress at the next Council meeting on March 23, 2022.

On April 13, 2022 Council considered Staff Report SRCS.22.07, which clarified the mission statement and goals of the IAC, and presented a list of proposed IAC events for 2022. The events being proposed by the IAC were a monthly Indigenous culture night and 7 additional events to take place on dates of significance (including, for example, a candlelight vigil on May 5 for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women/Red Dress Day and a traditional drum and fire circle on August 9 for International Indigenous Day). Staff Report SRCS.22.07 included the following recommendation, which Council approved:

That staff continue to work with Indigenous Action Committee to provide sites for their events free of facility rental fees and report back at the end of the 1 year pilot period.

IAC Permits

Between April 13, 2022 to April 13, 2023 IAC requested to book facilities for 18 events/programs and the City provided permits free of charge in response to all but one of these requests. The one request for which a permit was not granted was a request to use the Richmond Hill Centre of Performing Arts for a music event in November 2022. The permit request was withdrawn by IAC due to the short timeline available for fundraising to cover other venue costs (including costs for cleaning, staffing and ticket sale surcharges).

Three of the IAC permits issued over the last year were for parks, 11 permits were for multi-purpose rooms, and 3 permits were for gymnasiums. Appendix 1 provides a detailed list of IAC facility permit requests over the last year including the event sites, event dates, and value of the waived facility booking cost. The total value of facility bookings waived for IAC events during the 1 year pilot period was \$11,845.

Additional Considerations

In March of 2022, Staff met with 4 founding members of the IAC. Over the course of the last year, leadership of the IAC has changed as some members have left the group to found other groups with similar goals around fostering greater access to Indigenous culture and healing, and facilitating events and services to bring Indigenous communities together.

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On November 23, 2022 Council directed staff to reinstate the Community and Cultural Grant program. This City grant program provides an opportunity for community organizations to apply for funding to support cultural events and community programs throughout the year.

In March 29, 2023, Council approved Richmond Hill's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy and Action Plan, which includes a recommendation for the City to create a corporate and council vision and framework for Indigenous relations. It is anticipated that the provision of park and facility space for Indigenous programming and events will be considered within the overall context of the proposed vision and framework.

Staff have investigated the extent to which other municipalities are providing free park and facility space to Indigenous groups. Some municipalities are currently providing free spaces on a case-by-case basis (for example, Burlington), others have a limited policy applicable to specific venues or times (for example, Peterborough and Innisfil), and others support free spaces within the context of other programs or policies (for example, Toronto). Additionally, a number of municipalities are working toward the development of more comprehensive programs or policies (for example Toronto, Caledon and East Gwillimbury).

Facility Booking for Future Events

To ensure that all Indigenous groups have equal opportunity to host events in Richmond Hill, it is recommended that park, multi-purpose room and gymnasium bookings fees be waived for all Indigenous groups moving forward. The following parameters will apply:

- Permits must be for events and programs intended to promote or celebrate Indigenous culture, bring Indigenous communities together and/or practice Indigenous traditions.
- Event and program attendance must be open to the community.
- As is typical for park permits, a refundable deposit of \$500 for outdoor park events will be required. The deposit can be left in place to cover multiple events and will only be drawn on in the event there is damage or sanitation requirements beyond regular emptying of waste receptacles.
- Subletting or otherwise renting out any park area or room will not be permitted.
- The waiving of fees applies exclusively to the fee for the park or facility permit. Use of any additional equipment or resources will be subject to regular fees.
- Permit requests must be submitted in the 2 to 4 week window before the event or program date, or as otherwise agreed by the Community Services Department.
- All City policies and procedures (aside from the specific requirement to pay the facility rental/booking fee) will apply to the permit applications and events.

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Additionally, the City will provide in-kind resources in the form of promotions/advertising and equipment rentals should any Indigenous group wish to partner with the City in hosting a community event on one of the following days of significance:

- May 5, National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (Red Dress Day)
- June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day
- September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day)

Groups would need to contact the City a minimum of 3 months in advance to initiate discussions about potential partnership events.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no staffing implications of this report; however, it is estimated that recommendations will result in annual waiving of fees valued at approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Waiving the facility booking fees for Indigenous groups to host events and programs aligns with Council’s priority of a Strong Sense of Belonging.

Climate Change Considerations:

Climate change considerations are not applicable to this staff report.

Conclusion:

On April 13, 2022 Council directed that staff “work with Indigenous Action Committee to provide sites for their events free of facility rental fees and report back at the end of the 1 year pilot period.” Between April 13, 2022 and April 13, 2023 the City issued 17 facility permits with a total value of \$11,845.26 to IAC free of charge.

In order for the City to continue on a path toward truth and reconciliation, it is recommended that park, meeting room and gymnasium fees be waived for all Indigenous groups, subject to the parameters outlined in this report. Additionally, it is recommended that the City provide additional in-kind resources to groups wishing to host events in partnership to commemorate and celebrate Indigenous culture on identified days of national significance.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix 1 – IAC Facility Permit Requests April 13, 2022 to April 13, 2023

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.23.03 Indigenous Action Committee - 1 Year Pilot.docx
Attachments:	- SRCS.23.03 Appendix 1 - IAC Pilot.docx
Final Approval Date:	Apr 25, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tracey Steele - Apr 24, 2023 - 10:00 AM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 25, 2023 - 11:55 AM